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Female Resistance:

Spatial Metaphor in Japanese Women's Literature of the mid-Heian Period

by

Valerie Lynne Henitiuk

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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T5K 2K6

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled FEMALE RESISTANCE: SPATIAL METAPHOR IN JAPANESE WOMEN'S LITERATURE OF THE MID-HEIAN PERIOD submitted by Valerie Lynne Henitiuk in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Japanese Literature.

Dr. Sonja Arntzen

Janice Brown
Dr. Janice Brown

Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh

Oct. 28, 1999

Abstract

Spatial metaphor is analyzed as an expression of women's experience and especially as a vehicle for subversive messages of protest and resistance. The images of enclosure and violation are both literal and metaphorical.

Two literary works from Japan's mid-Heian period are discussed, namely Michitsuna no Haha's *Kagerô nikki* and Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari*, focussing on the varying strategies employed by four female characters for resisting patriarchal oppression. We first describe spatio-sexual metaphor in the *Kagerô nikki* to demonstrate the narrator's reaction to territorial violation by her husband and others. In the *Genji*, we examine the Akashi Lady's determined resistance to male control of her life, and the Third Princess' retreat within a fictive prepubescent space in an effort to render herself sexually inaccessible. Lastly, we detail the unique case of Ôigimi, who starves herself to death in a desperate bid to retain control over her body and life.

Preface

Japanese words have been romanized throughout according to the modified Hepburn system. Japanese personal names have been transcribed according to the Asian tradition of placing the family name in first position.

Acknowledgement

The most heartfelt thanks go out to my supervisor, Dr. Sonja Arntzen, who contributed immeasurably to the definition and redefinition of the conceptual space of this thesis and remained enthusiastic throughout its many reconstructions. The companionship of Gretchen Phillips, who graciously consented on a regular basis to joining me in indulging my caffeine addiction, was a constant source of support throughout this MA programme as well. Lastly, this evidence of what might be called my "Edifice Complex" could never have seen the light of day without the unflagging encouragement of my husband, Stuart White, to whom I am eternally grateful.

Now that this thesis will no longer be simply taking up space on my desk, and in the hope that the ideas contained herein will find their way into the nooks and crannies of your own mind, gentle reader, I hereby launch you into space, Heian style....

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Introduction

> *The principal aim of the novel is human emotions. Society and customs follow next. [...] the novelist's primary task is to criticize life.*
>
> \- Tsubouchi Shôyô

> *Je suis l'espace où je suis.*
>
> \- Noël Arnaud

Much of the literature written by women throughout history has tended to privilege interior space. Odysseus embarked on his lengthy quest throughout the Ancient World, Don Quixote travelled across Spain, Captain Ahab sailed the deep in search of Moby Dick, and Huck set off with Jim down the Mississippi, but feminine horizons have normally been somewhat narrower. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* opens with a statement of the main character's thankfulness that the inclement weather precludes an outdoor walk, and most of its striking episodes are intimately connected with the confined space in which they occur: witness the nightmarish Red Room and gloomy Lowood School, or the mysterious and yet beloved Thornfield Hall. Jane Austen repeatedly describes her young and not-so-young heroines as waiting passively in a succession of drawing rooms for prospective husbands to enter and remove them to other, presumably more comfortable and happy homes. George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke is first encountered in the sitting room of Tipton Grange, where she is eternally caught up in designing the layout of cottages for the local villagers. The eponymous heroine of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* spends the day preparing her home for yet another in a lifelong string of parties that she is to give that evening. Such focus on interiority is far from surprising, given that many societies the world over significantly curtail the scope of women's comings and goings, and therefore of their ambitions and concerns. Living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and nurseries must almost inevitably play a vital role for the sex more likely to become governess of a tiny world within walls than governor of the greater one without.

The texts produced in Japan during the Heian period (8^{th}-12^{th} century) are no exception. Typical upper-class women of this time spent their entire lives confined behind walls and doors, curtains and screens, all but immobilized in multiple layers of clothing. Nonetheless, from the depths of this isolation, Michitsuna no Haha (the "Mother of Michitsuna"), Murasaki Shikibu, and others were able to produce the diaries, poems, romances, and miscellaneous writings that form the Classical Japanese literary canon.[1] The work of any author will inevitably be informed by the society in which he or she lives, and the images found in his or her work function explicitly and implicitly as a commentary on that society and its values. This thesis will concern itself with spatial metaphor employed by women authors in what constitute varied and variously coded representations of resistance to oppression within a patriarchal system. The four cases discussed are drawn from two quite distinct works. Chapter One concerns the late 10th-century *Kagerô nikki*, an autobiographical work written by Michitsuna's Mother and translated into English by Edward Seidensticker first in 1959 and again in 1964 as *The Gossamer Years: The Diary of a Noblewoman of Heian Japan*, and by Sonja Arntzen in 1997 as *The Kagerô Diary*. Chapters Two, Three, and Four deal with a trio of female characters from the early 11th-century *Genji monogatari*, Murasaki Shikibu's monumental novel, known to English readers as *The Tale of Genji* through translations by Arthur Waley and Seidensticker, dating 1927-33 and 1976, respectively.

If we consider the case of Michitsuna's Mother, the fact that history knows the author only as parent to her son underscores the rather nugatory status of woman in her culture, someone whose identity is based primarily on that of the males to whom she is related. While the sobriquet conceals her identity, it nonetheless insists on the central fact of her femininity. Given the canonical status of the female authors mentioned above, Japanese readers have never laboured under the mistaken impression, common in the West, "that there were no women novelists (or none of note) before Jane Austen."[2] In Japan, it is widely recognized that literary history has not been populated exclusively by men, and women's literature, far from being marginalized, actually forms an integral part of the foundational texts. Authors such as Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shônagon (who wrote *Makura no sôshi*, translated by Ivan Morris in 1991 as *The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon*) are among the most celebrated Japanese writers of either gender, and their production has accordingly shaped literary development in that country. Some thousand years ago, rival factions competed with one another to attract the most accomplished writers and poets to serve as ladies-in-waiting to their female relatives, with a view to enhancing their own prestige. This situation fostered the talents of many women, who expressed their sensibilities in numerous literary forms, including poetry, correspondence, and a variety of prose narratives. Literary salons that formed around an empress, high priestess, or other well-born woman perfected critical faculties as well, as compositions were circulated and their merits discussed by the author's contemporaries. In short, a readership comprising both males and females privileged literature by professional women writers. (To place this situation in context, no woman would earn a living by her pen in England until the seventeenth century, when Aphra Behn appeared on the scene.)

Similarly to the use of Latin by educated men throughout much of European history, the men at the Heian court employed Chinese in their writings. Excluded (at least theoretically) by custom and education from learning that language, these women found literary expression in their native Japanese, using the new *onna-de* (literally, woman's hand) syllabary of *hiragana*. While this script was far from the exclusive preserve of the female sex (men did commonly use it in corresponding with their lovers, for example), it was nonetheless highly gendered. Heian-period women were never identified, nor did they self-identify, as *voleuses de langue*, to borrow a French feminist phrase for present-day revolutionary reaction to centuries of male appropriation of language, in that their claim to written Japanese was rarely challenged.[3] They turned this situation to full advantage, enjoying the freedom of writing in their mother tongue, rather than in a second language ill-adapted to the characteristics of Japanese, and created what often strikes today's reader as a very modern style. Lengthy, complex sentences flow in and out of the consciousness of several characters, shifting from first to third person, merging speech, thought, and narrative. Due to the restrictions imposed by a male-dominated society, Heian women wrote primarily within the private rather than the public sphere and were concerned with detailed examinations of inter-personal behaviour rather than sweeping historical or political discussions. Their works emphasize the psychological response of individuals to the subtleties of intimate relationships, and do so with immense beauty and power.

As implied above, we do not possess a great deal of biographical information about either of the authors who concern us in this thesis, not even their actual names. With the exception of the consorts and mothers/grandmothers of emperors, the names of women of this time were not recorded. Thus, for instance, we find works attributed to Michitsuna's Mother and Takasue's Daughter (the latter wrote the *Sarashina nikki*, which Morris translated in 1971 under the title *As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams: Recollections of a Woman in Eleventh-Century Japan*). The *Genji*'s author is also known to us by a pseudonym only, in her case one where a title her father held at one point in his career, i.e. *shikibu* (Minister of Ceremonial), is affixed to the name of her most famous heroine, Murasaki. Similarly, the author of *The Pillow Book* is referred to as Sei, i.e. a Sino-Japanese reading of the family name Kiyowara, and *shônagon*, one of her own father's titles.

What little we do know about Michitsuna's Mother is as follows. She was born in approximately 936, one of at least three daughters (there were also two sons) of Fujiwara Tomoyasu, a relatively undistinguished provincial governor. At the age of eighteen or so, she married Fujiwara Kaneie, an important figure in the Heian court who was already involved with several other wives and concubines. They had only one child, the aforementioned Michitsuna, although she also adopted a daughter (incidentally, Kaneie's child by an abandoned mistress) later in life. The "diary" is a highly personal account of the years 954 through 974. Of course, what we in the West normally understand by the term diary only partially coincides with the *Kagerô* *nikki*, which "exhibits some diary-like features but shifts between first- and third-person narration and suppresses material irrelevant to a clearly defined central theme."[4] Neither does it actually provide a day-to-day account of her adult life, since the author likely did not begin to set down the text until 971, well after the marriage had failed. Michitsuna's Mother includes in the work an extensive collection of poetry (she was and is acknowledged among the finest poets of her age) and details her emotional responses to various events in her life. Its central focus is her unfulfilling marriage to a politically powerful man.

Murasaki Shikibu was also of the provincial governor class, born into a family widely respected for their literary talents. (As an aside, she was actually the grand-niece-in-law of Michitsuna's Mother, which fact is indicative of how small the world inhabited by the Heian elite actually was.) Her own dates are highly uncertain. We do know that she married in 999, likely when in her early twenties; gave birth to a daughter and was widowed two years later; entered the service of Empress Shôshi in 1006 or 1007; and died in about 1014, although her death could have occurred as much as a dozen years later. Her literary output was extensive, including a *monogatari* (tale), many *waka* (brief Japanese poems), and a *nikki* (diary). The lengthy and complex *Genji monogatari*, comprising some 54 parts or chapters, is today universally recognized as the great masterpiece of Japanese prose. Slightly more than two thirds (41 chapters) recounts the story of the many loves of Genji, the Shining Prince, while the remainder follows the amorous career of his putative son Kaoru.

Both of these women lived in a time and place where polygynous relationships were the rule. It was in fact common practice for Heian noblemen to keep a sort of harem of wives and concubines and, to the consternation of the women involved, these relationships were frequently of a rather amorphous nature. As Francine Hérail puts it in her acclaimed 1995 book entitled *La Cour du Japon à l'époque de Heian aux X^e et XI^e siècles*:

> toutes les femmes n'avaient pas la chance d'être la seule épouse d'un homme. Il leur fallait quelquefois se contenter d'être une seconde épouse, ou même une concubine au statut plus précaire, la différence étant quelquefois assez mince.[5]

A "wedding" was traditionally celebrated simply by the man visiting the rooms of his paramour three nights in a row, and "divorce" could occur just as easily once he chose to stop paying visits. Marriages tended to be uxorilocal, with husbands dropping in more or less regularly on wives who remained living in their mother's home. Given that women were allowed few opportunities for expeditions into the outside world, they are often reduced to days, if not weeks, of listless and fruitless waiting for husband/lover to make an appearance. One can well imagine the frustrations and worries of a woman forced to live under such vague and insecure conditions, no matter how kind or beloved the man involved.

Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner have noted in an apt simile that Heian men enjoyed the mobility of a bee while the women were rooted like flowers in their homes.[6] It is only logical, then, that feminine-coded interiority should play a significant role in the literature produced during that period. While the curtailment of female freedom of movement was externally enforced by the patriarchy, paradoxically enough, women actively sought to reinforce this isolation. The society outside their walls being viewed as threatening, a woman's sole means for securing the self was to hide ever deeper behind additional barriers. In fact, images of female retreat can be traced back to even one of the earliest myths concerning Japan's origins, in which the goddess Amaterasu seeks refuge from the unacceptable misbehaviour of men, notably her brother, by withdrawing into a cave. Such texts as the *Kagerô nikki* and *Genji monogatari* are intimately concerned with the private sphere—the inner, emotional landscape of the female author and protagonists—and are thereby fertile ground for images of enclosure and violation. Doris Bargen rightly underscores that the male aggression inherent to Heian courtship rituals is "easy to overlook because violent acts took place within an elegantly mannered social context."[7] Comparing the mating game to a type of hunt, she characterizes women as the symbolic, helpless prey, surrounded by a hostile wilderness. Although structured around matrilineal inheritance and uxorilocal marriage, the Heian social architecture was jealously controlled by a ruthless patriarchy, which set great store by female seclusion and chastity. As valuable commodities in marriage politics, with the Fujiwara males plotting to marry their daughters into the Imperial family and thus produce grandsons who could become emperors, women had to be kept secure and virginal. Even among the lower aristocracy not in line for the throne, wives, mistresses, and daughters were, as a rule, closely guarded and expected to remain hidden from men. The consequence of such an ideology is a plethora of real and fictional scenes wherein impassioned suitors fight their way through tangled, overgrown gardens, past outer and inner gates, and finally penetrate the female inner sanctum. Such images are, in fact, the stock in trade of Heian literature, and the thrust of the present thesis is how women react to this ever-present threat of male violation.

For women in this period, as in much of history, the integrity of their person was precarious in the extreme. We have already suggested that this society's ostensible valuing of feminine virginity and fidelity offered little guarantee of true protection from men. Accordingly, women were forced into a highly self-reliant state in their attempts to solidify a position and ensure survival (actual, social, and psychological) in a world that denied any significant security of self to even the most well-born. Hérail comments that Murasaki Shikibu often focuses on

> les aspects négatifs de la vie à la cour : l'impossibilité de s'isoler – les écrans et rideaux ne permettaient guère d'éviter les indiscrétions masculines –, les bavardages et cancans des autres dames, la présence fatigante de jeunes seigneurs, les inimitiés et jalousies, les plaisanteries qu'il fallait subir, les sobriquets dont on pouvait être affublé, la crainte des impairs et du ridicule.[8]

Where a woman was concerned, therefore, much of life at the palace comprised an eternal and exhausting struggle with both aggressive masculine attentions and animosity from ambitious rivals. Neither were the *ie no onna* (literally "house-women", i.e. those not engaged at court) spared such trials. In the close-knit and highly sensitive world of the Heian nobility, private structures were no less subject to attack and breach than public ones.

The matrilineal traditions of Heian Japan, where homes and property were normally inherited along the female line, would at first glance seem to imply a strong notion of security for women. Nonetheless, if we consider the comparatively flimsy construction of traditional Japanese housing (wood, paper and straw rather than brick or concrete, and essentially barrier-free construction techniques, for instance), the validity of taking the woman-owned house as a guarantee of safety becomes compromised. Bruce A. Coats rightly comments on "the insubstantiality of Heian residential architecture and the penetrability of courtyard gardens"[9], and, indeed, the intruder motif is central to the *Kagerô nikki*, *Genji monogatari*, and other works of the time. A woman without a nearby influential male to protect her real estate and, by extension, herself, is constantly exposed to violation on numerous fronts. And once one has attracted a protector, one's unending task becomes the retention of his loyalty, for any abandoned woman has not only been insulted by one man's rejection but finds herself left wide open to potential abuse at the hands of others. As Helen Craig McCullough rightly points out, in one sense the *Kagerô nikki* constitutes "an unvarnished account of what happens when a girl without powerful family backing embarks on a marriage with a man who can divorce her simply by ceasing to visit or communicate with her."[10] Far from wholeheartedly embarking on this union, that particular author was fully cognizant of the frightening loss of autonomy it would represent.

Michitsuna's Mother was actually one of the lucky women on history's pages, in that at least she was able to maintain her own residence throughout most of her marriage, following the typical custom of her time. While the norm was for this sort of visiting marital relationship (*kayoikon*), some women even in the mid-Heian period found themselves being taken to live in their lover's house, or in a joint residence established elsewhere. The latter options eventually become the romantic ideal, in fact. Murasaki Shikibu very skilfully utilizes the virilocal marriage model to demonstrate how Genji behaves honourably in thus providing protection for his many women, and simultaneously to debunk the myth of how the weaker sex always benefited from such displacement. Norma Field explains the development of this practice as follows:

> It was only when the woman was of lower status or had no protectors (such as a princess whose parents had died) that she lived in the man's house. Because this suggested kindness on the part of the man, it gradually became a desirable mode of existence for many women, including the variously romantic authors of the *Gossamer Years* [*Kagerô nikki*] and *As I Crossed the Bridge of Dreams*. When seen in this perspective, all the residents of the Eastern Pavilion as well as of the later, grander Rokujo-in are the recipients of Genji's benefaction.[11]

Nevertheless, not all women welcome such "benefaction", which comes at the price of their autonomy, minute as it may be during this period, and signifies entrusting themselves entirely to their lover's goodwill. Contrary to Field's assertion above, we will see that Michitsuna's Mother, despite the very real loneliness she suffers during Kaneie's frequent and often lengthy absences, is in fact fully aware of the potential disadvantages such a living arrangement would bring. As a matter of fact, although temporarily relocated to a residence owned by her husband, this woman eventually determines that various types of "unpleasantness" may well be due "to [her] living so close"[12], and thus has Kaneie move her to a "place a little distant."[13] As well, Murasaki Shikibu has both the Akashi Lady and Ôigimi desperately resist being moved from their own homes on the periphery to their respective suitor's Heian-kyô residence, where each fears becoming more subject to a man's whims. While the Third Princess is given no choice respecting her own virilocal marriage (being for all intents and purposes "a princess whose parents had died"), she clearly works to discourage Genji from frequenting her quarters, in an attempt to create a female-centred sanctuary inside his house.

Sandra M. Gilbert has written that "women writers have frequently responded to sociocultural constraints by creating symbolic narratives that express their common feelings of constriction, exclusion, dispossession [...]."[14] We will demonstrate in this thesis how our authors do just that, creating narratives that describe what are both literal and metaphorical inhibiting/inhabited boundaries. While the barriers are of course set up ostensibly to protect women, the Heian version of *purdah* proves to offer only an illusion of security as, one by one, our heroines succumb to male incursions. Richard Bowring comments that "the core characteristics of these buildings [i.e. the domestic architecture of the day] was that the boundary between outside and inside was fluid in the extreme, with a design of utmost flexibility."[15] However, it is important to note that this fluidity of ingress and egress was weighted heavily in one direction, in that it was in fact available to men only. Women did not move anywhere near so freely between home and the exterior, and conversely actually fell victim again and again to the male's ease of access within these fatally permeable boundaries. We will see that a female's outward movement was typically restricted to either a vicarious release of music or scent wafting on the breeze, or a passive participation in the visual exploitation of a *kaimami* (literally "peeking through a gap in a fence", more generally this literature's omnipresent peeping tom motif). Hérail describes the situation of court women as follows:

> En outre, il n'existaient pas de fermetures solides ; écrans, volets coulissants, stores ne permettaient pas de s'isoler. C'était pour

> certaines dames en service au palais un des aspects déplaisants de leur vie que de ne pas pouvoir éviter quelquefois une intrusion indésirable. En outre, rien n'arrêtait les voleurs, ils sévissaient même au palais, notamment la nuit.[16]

This thesis will argue that a far greater danger to women of the time than the apparently ever-present thieves were the equally ever-present and ever-libidinous men who repeatedly violate female spaces, both physical and corporeal. If even the well-guarded palace was vulnerable, how much more so was the space of an *ie no onna*, who found herself subject to a seemingly endless series of unwanted visitations, as we will see in the chapters to follow.

The resistance exhibited by the four women discussed in this thesis represents a strong protest against the oppression of women in Heian Japan. The protest is nonetheless muted, because, naturally enough, the writing of anything more direct might well prove to have a severely negative effect on the author's own social standing, not to mention the potential dissemination of her work. Metaphorically-expressed objections are less blatant yet somehow more profound than that acted out by Higekuro's first wife, for example, who literally dumps ashes on his head when he installs the young and lovely Tamakazura in their home. That episode of open rebellion in the *Genji monogatari* is played as comic relief. The female characters with whom we are concerned express their protest in more subtle ways, fully cognizant that any obvious challenge to the status quo would be counter-productive. Since the gender-based injustice is endemic and utterly entrenched, the sole realistic female response to the resulting disempowerment is retreat.

The first case to be studied is that of Michitsuna no Haha, or at least the persona she offers us in her *Kagerô nikki*. Insofar as it is defined as a diary, it constitutes more of a non-fiction, historical document than does the *Genji*. Nonetheless, we have already demonstrated that the Western term "diary" is not exactly equivalent to "nikki", and her text must be taken as more a work of literature than a strictly factual account of her life. The entire text is replete with spatial metaphors that create a meta-text of resistance paralleling the dominant text of complaint, what Arntzen calls a "discourse of sorrow".[17] We will examine how the narrator reacts to various violations—physical, metaphorical, visual and aural—perpetrated against her domestic and bodily boundaries by her husband and other men.

This thesis will then progress to a detailed decoding of the metaphors of space surrounding three female characters in the *Genji monogatari*. Chapter Two deals with the Akashi Lady, daughter to a lowly (relatively speaking) provincial governor-turned-priest, residing in the hinterlands far from the capital. While the tradition would lead one to anticipate that a woman with her social disadvantages should feel profound gratitude for Genji's attentions, she actually demonstrates a determined, albeit veiled, resistance. Forced to leave her father's home, she effectively delays being co-opted into her husband's domestic sphere by setting up house in an alternate residence belonging to her mother's family. The Akashi Lady proves a worthy opponent for the Shining Prince and the patriarchy he symbolizes, as she takes control of her enforced displacements, turning the tables on the male while appearing to bow self-effacingly to him.

In Chapter Three, we revisit the Third Princess, all too frequently dismissed as "uninteresting". It will be demonstrated that, far from being a dull and passive quasi-infant, this character employs deliberate and quite sophisticated strategies in her partially successful resistance to male invasion. Denied any architectural space to call her own, this young woman is forced to seek substitute boundaries in the psychological sphere. While she effects her retreat within mental space rather than behind physical barriers, both the cause and the effect of her resistance are congruent to those of the other cases discussed. The princess is bestowed upon Genji by her father, yet does not assent to playing the mating game into which she has been thrown. In an increasingly desperate attempt to avoid the sexual interest displayed by the men around her, both legitimate and illegitimate, this heroine refuses to depart the world of childhood and its inherent sexual inaccessibility. She constantly seeks refuge within prepubescent space, clinging to a fictive immaturity that seems to offer her only chance at security of self.

Lastly, the unique case of Ôigimi, who experiences the painful consequences of deviating from accepted socio-cultural patterns, will be analyzed. For this Uji princess, personal space is ultimately reduced to one's own body. After a childhood and adolescence spent in comfortable obscurity at Uji, she is eventually forced to deal with the incursions of civilization, represented by the insistent male. By creating a suitor whose patience and sensitivity render him well nigh the ideal partner, Murasaki Shikibu makes it clear that Ôigimi does not reject Kaoru *per se*, but rather all representatives of the patriarchy. Our heroine is fatally aware that relationships with men in her society are by definition exploitive, and is determined to avoid the sad fate of her sister, married to a sexual adventurer. The only strategy acceptable to her is ultimately to starve herself to death. As Elaine Showalter says of other doomed heroines: "Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, Edith Wharton's Lily Bart, Olive Schreiner's Lyndall, Kate Chopin's Edna Pontellier wake to worlds which offer no places for the woman they wish to become, and rather than struggling [further], they die."[18] Ôigimi is prevented from living her life in a manner compatible with her personal needs, and so it is, paradoxically enough, only through denial of her body/life that she can succeed in preserving its integrity.

The chapters have been structured in a roughly chronological fashion, starting with the earliest literary persona, and continuing through the three *Genji* characters according to the order in which they make their appearance in the text. However, an additional method of categorization is at play. The first two chapters of this thesis focus on the physical and external, beginning with a quite immediate delimitation of personal territory and expanding into a broader notion of the concept. Michitsuna no Haha's boundaries are defined by walls, gates, screens, and curtains. The Akashi Lady, dragged into the political arena against her will, makes use of larger, geographical displacements in an effort to assert some control over her life. Both cases, however, emphasize physical means for protecting the self. In contrast, the latter two chapters are more closely concerned with assertion of control over emotional and inner boundaries. The Third Princess must substitute mental space for a domestic territory that she has never possessed. Ôigimi, who is dispossessed of her architectural refuge through Kaoru's insistently intrusive behaviour, is eventually led to focus on the internal perimeters inherent to her own body. Whether resistance is manifested materially or mentally does not, however, alter the fact that the desire for self-determination is the same.

Such actual or virtual orphans as the Third Princess and Ôigimi suffer "real alienation from the patriarchal chain-of-being [that] prefigures the hellish fate in store for them,"[19] and thus their struggle is the more desperate one. Where Michitsuna's Mother and the Akashi Lady work within the existing social structure toward some sort of independence from marital conflict, the latter pair of women regress to an unnatural, asexual state as they actively and fundamentally challenge the system by refusing to accept relations with men. In any event, all four female characters represent a continuum of resistance, demonstrating an identical need to establish a territorial envelope in which to shroud their bodies and selves against male incursion and exploitation.

This thesis is argued from a firmly feminist stance. The choice of theoretical approach is far from arbitrary, given that it mirrors concerns that are central to the works in question. Although Ôba Minako is correct to a certain extent in calling Heian women's literature "guidebooks for how women observe men"[20], both Murasaki Shikibu and Michitsuna's Mother are also vitally interested in the women themselves. There is nothing androgynous about this literature—women were and are an integral fact of authorship, readership, and character. While men did and do read these texts, the primary audience envisioned appears to have been female. It might be argued that whereas male readers can, of course, be sympathetic, observation from without is rarely as insightful as understanding from within.[21]

In any event, female authorship is fundamental to the message of both works, and one ignores the feminist perspective at the risk of misreading the essential nature of the text. The aforementioned authors were well-educated women living and working in an intellectual enclave within a highly restrictive society, and therefore certain gender issues are likely to make their appearance. As distant from us temporally and geographically as these two writers may be, they are at bottom only you and me and Wilma dressed differently (to paraphrase Virginia Woolf). It should be underscored that we have been careful to avoid either reading into these texts what is not there, or forcing them into an inappropriate and extraneous late 20th-century interpretative mould. Roland Barthes has taught us that "interpréter un texte, ce n'est pas lui donner un sens (plus ou moins fondé, plus ou moins libre), c'est au contraire apprécier de quel pluriel il est fait."[22] The intent of this thesis is precisely to examine those multiple meanings present in the text, particularly various subversive aspects that may have been overlooked by critics to date. The objective of a feminist critical study is to offer additional interpretations that allow for a fuller, more comprehensive reading of all facets of this literature. What we will attempt to do is highlight recurrent images existing within these two works, side by side with the major and minor plot lines, and posit their real significance. It has been said that "feminist criticism represents the discovery/recovery of a voice, a unique and uniquely powerful voice"[23], and our hope is in fact simply to render this existing voice more audible in all its registers.

Feminist critics in the West argue that an entire tradition of writings by women has been ignored or discounted by male critics. In Japan, as we have noted above, although literary fashion and readership have naturally undergone various shifts over the centuries, women's literature has conversely remained well respected and continuous. Nonetheless, the classification of these works as **women**'s literature rather than under the more generic heading of Classical Japanese literature has perhaps been neglected, in that elements of importance to a feminist reader may not have been given their due. Showalter characterizes how we are learning to read women's texts today as "a radical alteration of our vision, a demand that we see meaning in what has previously been empty space."[24] In the last decade or so, we have been offered revisionary re-readings of the *Genji monogatari*, *Kagerô nikki*, and so on—bringing, in Patrocinio Schweickart's terms, "the nature of the text back into the foreground."[25] In the introduction to her *The Kagerô Diary*, as well, Arntzen states that her inspiration stemmed in part from a realization that much of Michitsuna's Mother had been lost in earlier translations:

> reading the original text, I was not prepared for its exquisite beauty. It was not that the content was so different from Seidensticker's translation, but the mode of expression, the language was so different.[26]

Nor is this feminist re-vision limited to the West. For example, Setouchi Jakuchô has recently published a modern Japanese version of Murasaki Shikibu's masterwork, grounding her interpretation on a perception of the novel as the story of Genji's women, rather than of the eponymous hero himself. A female perspective is being restored to these women's texts, as we move away from what could be termed Genji-centric readings.

To take the *Kagerô nikki* as an example, the author's primary purpose was likely to preserve a collection of poetry written by herself and others. A secondary motive, and the one that concerns us here, is explicitly stated at the very outset of the text: to expose the fallacies contained in the romances popular at the time, what she refers to as *furu-monogatari*[27], and reveal the true situation of a Heian woman unhappily married to an influential man—in a sense to write an anti-romance. What this indicates is that the Mother of Michitsuna felt a sense of responsibility for passing information about a real woman's life along to her women readers (including an adopted daughter)—to subvert patriarchal fictions about the female experience, in other words. Joshua Mostow suggests that the existing *monogatari* "gave her a genre to write against, thereby defining her own writing and herself through opposition."[28] Such opposition to the oppressive societal order, as well as its misleading literary representations, is revealed throughout her *nikki*. This work has been accurately described as "the first attempt in Japanese literature, or in any case the first surviving attempt, to capture on paper, without evasion or idealization, the elements of a real social situation."[29] There is little doubt that Murasaki Shikibu read and was influenced by her relative's work, although the two were unlikely to have had any direct contact with one another. The younger woman was nonetheless more circumspect in her *nikki* about her own life than was Michitsuna's Mother, and thus much of the protest that, in the following chapters, we ascribe to Murasaki Shikibu regarding their mutual social situation as women living within a patriarchal system is to be unearthed within the context of her fiction. Seidensticker once commented that "the author [of the *Kagerô nikki*] has occasion to record her indignation at successive revelations of rival wives and mistresses […], and the diary is in a sense her protest against the marriage system of the time and her exposition of the thesis that men are beasts."[30] While this statement is, to say the least, an oversimplification of that text's message, Michitsuna no Haha clearly has an interest in protesting the fundamentally unjust power imbalance, as does Murasaki Shikibu.

Jacques Derrida's statement that "metaphor is never innocent"[31] applies very well to the spatial models employed in these texts. Given that the underpinning of all social relations is spatial, human beings tend to be defined by the spaces we inhabit. In a society where the interior is explicitly coded feminine, images of interiority function ineluctably as reflections on what it means to be a woman. As both of these Heian authors manipulate this social coding, they manage powerfully to delineate the constraints placed on women of their time, and subversively to lodge a protest against a ruthlessly patriarchal system. Their dissatisfaction, upon which society has imposed silence, is revealed metaphorically to the sympathetic reader.

In order to respect what Yosano Akiko once termed "the staunch determination that lies beneath her [Murasaki Shikibu's] indirect turn of phrase"[32], we must open our eyes and ears to what the *Genji* and *Kagerô nikki* actually say, and become more aware of the psychosexual messages that their writers deliberately placed in their texts. Significance must be actively attributed to rhetorical strategies that are unlikely to be arbitrary in the hands of such immensely skilled storytellers. If we bear in mind that both Michitsuna's Mother and Murasaki Shikibu were writing for an audience intimately familiar with the same (female) imaginative universe and social reality, any attempt to deny the symbolic nature and real import of these images of enclosure and violation becomes problematic. This thesis will examine how the spatial metaphors employed by these authors describe and underscore the coping strategies of middle- and high-ranking *ie no onna* as they navigate their way through or attempt entirely to avoid unwanted relationships with men.

He placed his hand on my curtain:
Spatio-Sexual Metaphor in the *Kagerô Nikki*

> *Most men's clubs confine women to a special room, or annexe, and exclude them from other apartments, whether on the principle observed at St. Sofia that they are impure, or whether on the principle observed at Pompeii that they are too pure, is matter for speculation.*
>
> \- Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*

> *So a house is not the same for a woman. She is not someone who walks into the house, to make use of it, and will walk out again. She* is *the house; there is no separation possible.*
>
> \- Alice Munro, *Dance of the Happy Shades*

It has been said that Michitsuna no Haha "was charting terra incognita with untried tools: the recording of a woman's life in Japanese prose."[1] She turned these tools to full advantage, setting down for us in three books a twenty-year stretch within that life and incorporating a great deal of poetry by herself and her correspondents. There is some suggestion that her husband Kaneie may well have married the author at least partly for her skill in *waka* composition, with the expectation that she would both collect their poems to one another and vicariously enhance his prestige by making submissions to public poetry competitions (which she did, with marked success). Be that as it may, in both verse and prose, the Mother of Michitsuna details her emotional responses to events occurring throughout their marriage, in particular various conflicts and dissatisfactions. Although she welcomes her husband's attentions when her autonomy is respected, relationships between the genders in a patriarchal social system are exposed as a dynamic wherein this courtesy is rarely extended. Women are forced to retreat behind walls, screens, and other barriers in an attempt to preserve a modicum of independence. This chapter will examine how the narrator's persona identifies her self with interior space, and how she resists or offers a posture of resistance to any violation of that space by her husband and others.

Interpretations of her *nikki*, at least in the West, have occasionally been governed by a mild hostility toward the author herself, as this comment by Morris reveals:

> *Gossamer Diary*, for example, is one long wail of jealousy by a woman in whom the emotion has attained hysterical proportions, and who gives vent in her writing to all the complaints, all the bitterness, all the tension that have accumulated during the long hours of waiting and that social convention prevents her from expressing in any more direct manner.[2]

A certain amount of jealousy is, of course, only to be expected. After all, Kaneie, following the *quondam* custom, was involved over his lifetime with some eight or nine other wives and concubines. However, today's readers are far from unanimous that the writing by Michitsuna no Haha constitutes merely or even primarily either a "wail" about the injustice of the system or irritating "hysteria."

A similarly patronizing attitude is expressed by Seidensticker, as follows:

> The insanity of Higekuro's wife in the *Tale of Genji* and the hysterical jealousy of Michitsuna's mother were perhaps common manifestations of the strain [of a polygynous system] on the mind of the delicate Heian lady.[3]

Many critics have focussed on the text's pervasive tone of self-pity, and disparaged its author accordingly. It should, nonetheless, be borne in mind that Japanese critics consider the apparent whining of Michitsuna's Mother to be at least partly a conceit of the time, a reflection of the fact that Heian aesthetics did not allow her to express pride and happiness in a straightforward manner. As Arntzen points out: "Given that the literary discourse of her time was designed for the expression of sorrow, even if she should want to convey the joy in her marriage, it might have to be channeled through the discourse of sorrow."[4]

One of the main motives for creating this text was in fact, as mentioned earlier, "to record the poetry she herself had written and that she had received from others, while presenting the contexts that produced it."[5] This notion is backed up by Mostow, whose article "The Amorous Statesman and the Poetess: The Politics of Autobiography and the *Kagerô Nikki*" takes the position that Michitsuna no Haha's impressive stature as a writer is absolutely vital to the genesis of her work and indeed her life as a whole.[6] McCullough likewise offers a very positive interpretation of the diary as a model of Heian prose:

> We know of approximately a dozen female writers whose works survive. The first, and one of the best, was the author of *The Gossamer Journal* [...] whose treatment of her subject matter -- a reflective examination of an unhappy marriage, with many poems and an exhaustive analysis of the nuances of the wife's feelings over the years -- not only paved the way for Murasaki Shikibu's psychological probings in *The Tale of Genji* a generation later, but also produced a narrative of remarkably convincing honesty and grace.[7]

Much of the frustration displayed by Michitsuna's Mother can, in fact, be directly attributed to the fact that she had very little to fill her days but reflecting on her life and its unhappy aspects. Heian noblewomen, especially those not serving at court, were constantly doing battle with an excess of leisure time, imposed by a patriarchal system that restricted female activities. (While Heian noblemen also appear to have passed many listless hours, they at least had the errands and other duties of their more demanding official positions to occupy themselves.) Many Western critics have pointed out that, to the conscious heroine, boredom may well be the greatest peril posed by romance.[8] And thus, as George Eliot phrased what is an almost universal problem, in societies where all that is expected of women and plants is that they look pretty and be bored, it is little wonder if "some of them have got poisonous."[9]

As an *ie no onna*, Michitsuna's Mother spent almost her entire life locked away *in situ* within her own home—a *tomaru hito* (literally, "person who stays") rather than the *yuku hito*[10] ("person who goes") represented by Kaneie. Before discussing the spatial metaphors she employs in the *Kagerô nikki*, it is essential that we establish the kind of world this woman inhabited on a daily basis. The following description of typical Heian interior space comes from Hérail:

> Des espaces intérieurs fermés étaient créés par des rideaux. On utilisait des écrans : un pied de bois noir laqué d'environ un mètre ou un mètre et demi portait à son sommet une barre perpendiculaire d'environ deux mètres d'où pendait un rideau. Comme les tissus étaient fabriqués en petite largeur, guère plus de trente centimètres, les panneaux étaient cousus et scandés par des cordons [….] Ces écrans pouvaient n'être pas très hauts, car les dames vivaient au ras du sol et se déplaçaient souvent à genoux dans l'intérieur.[11]

We see that domestic spaces were marked off in a rather insubstantial manner, with narrow strips of fabric hanging from wooden frames serving to separate one area from another. To avoid detection by prying eyes, women were forced to remain near to the floor and to shield themselves with hand-held fans, their own long hair, and so on. The triple function of screens in any society has been explained elsewhere as to divide/separate, to conceal/hide, and to protect/shield[12], on both an actual and figurative level. Accordingly, the sequestration of Heian women was decreed externally by the patriarchy in order to separate and isolate women from any participation in power structures, and to conceal a man's sexual property from rival suitors. Nonetheless, for these same women it simultaneously becomes a source of refuge, insulating them, at least in the short term, from the male gaze and related intrusive behaviour.

Because the very act of being seen is, to a Heian woman, practically equivalent to inviting sexual advances, visibility becomes a metaphor for exposure and virtual rape. As Mostow puts it, "in a society where noblewomen were cloistered and kept from view, 'seeing' could be the equivalent of the Biblical 'knowing'."[13] Males in this literature are constantly scheming to perform an act of *kaimami*, or otherwise gain varying types of access to a woman's quarters. A dialectic of violation and retreat is played out in the metaphorical body of these texts, revealing unambiguous images concerned with spatial and corporeal integrity. Each of the various heroines examined in this thesis lives under constant threat of a wide range of violations—physical, visual, and aural—of her boundaries. Michitsuna no Haha's writing of her own life provides a fascinating background against which to interpret spatial metaphor in women's writing of the mid-Heian period as indicative of female resistance to such incursions.

From the very start of their relationship, Kaneie's attentions are presented as unwelcome and more than mildly threatening. Despite her initial rebuffs, "he sends a retainer riding on a horse to pound on [her] gate."[14] Rather than interpreting this aggression positively as the actions of an ardent lover, Michitsuna no Haha attempts to reject and ignore her suitor. When required by family and friends to respond with a poem, she does not pretend to offer him any encouragement: "do not flutter a voice that / will be quite to no avail" (KD: 59). Although the text is brief and relatively ambivalent about this stage in their relationship, she likely would have preferred celibacy to marriage with this man who, according to McCullough, is elsewhere depicted "as a forceful, arrogant man, insensitive to the feelings of others."[15] While continuing to view Kaneie's suit as a less than sympathetic attack on her independence, our narrator ends by accepting him, and her diary reveals the ample opportunity she has to experience his insensitivity thereafter.

Perversely enough, for Kaneie, the barriers she erects in her resistance (both real and postured) serve merely to heighten his interest and desire. Michitsuna's Mother is not simply playing hard to get, however. Her nature would prefer what Ellen Peel calls the "luxury [...] reserved for the well-born"[16]: a form of indirectness where all interpersonal communication takes place primarily via the elegant and highly mediated written word rather than direct and potentially clumsy physical contact.[17] One discussion of Richardson's *Clarissa* notes that "letters, like rooms and dresses, protect and present and enclose the self,"[18] a comment that provides none too insignificant an insight into the functioning of the epistolary-based Heian society as well. This is not to deny that our author does grow to love her husband and desire his attentions, for at least some of this rejection and withdrawal is in fact a conceit of the resisting female that had developed within their society. Regardless, the metaphors embedded in this text lead readers to conclude that, while Michitsuna's Mother does look forward to and enjoy their romantic encounters together, *morotomo ni*[19], she is unable to reconcile her need to retain at least a semblance of autonomy with a relationship where the male is neither required nor inclined to respect her wishes and autonomy. As Eliot phrases the negative impact a lack of female self-determination can have on relationships: "A woman's love is always freezing into fear. She wants everything, she is sure of nothing."[20] Such fear often results, as it does here, in the woman's withdrawal increasingly inward.

On several occasions, Kaneie is pictured as encroaching violently upon Michitsuna no Haha's space, in intrusions described so as to prompt the reader to see them virtually as assault, sexual or otherwise. For example:

> On the evening of the second, he suddenly appeared. [...] he shouts all over the house. I am startled and feel anger boil up, then pushing away this attendant, pulling that one toward him [...], then imitating me in a simpering way, he upsets my attendants. I was quite struck dumb, and, sitting across from him, I must have ended up looking drained and completely beaten. (KD: 215-17)

And later:

> Suddenly he bursts in, takes the incense burner and other usual implements for the day's observances and scatters them about, takes my rosary and throws it up on a high shelf, and otherwise behaves in a wild manner. It was astounding. (KD: 259)

The above images resemble those of an invading force pillaging conquered territory, riding roughshod over an adversary now completely in its power. As well, it is significant that the second passage involves religious paraphernalia—he is in effect ransacking a place of worship[21] and striking at a person's most intimate aspect, her spirituality. This latter invasion is, nevertheless, not without its redeeming qualities. As Field comments about the *Genji*, "every scene, every event, has more than one role to play, and [...] some roles are contradictory."[22] Michitsuna's Mother is at her core conflicted and ambivalent about the joys and difficulties of communicating with the overbearing male. Sei Shônagon makes much the same point in her succinct list of "Things That are Near Though Distant":

> Paradise.
> The course of a boat.
> The relations between a man and a woman.[23]

The author of the *Kagerô nikki* underscores the contradictions inherent to interpersonal relationships by having the scene lead to a day spent in welcome intimacy between husband and wife.

On another occasion, their young son is co-opted into a joint violation of the narrator's space and stated intentions. Toying mercilessly with Michitsuna's parental loyalties, Kaneie uses the boy as an instrument of torment against his wife:

> "If that is how it is, one way or another, it is for you to decide. If she will leave, then let's have the carriage drawn up." Before he [Kaneie] had finished saying this, my son leaped up and just began to gather all the things scattered around, wrapping them up, stuffing into bags the things that needed packing and stowing it all away in the carriage. Then he took down the curtains and folded up other things, roughly packing it all away. I sat there dazed [...]. (KD: 253)

The son learns from his father how to oppress and control women, and as he takes possession of her space and belongings, his mother is forced to recognize her offspring's membership in and identification with the patriarchy.

A strong, independent woman (at least for her time), Michitsuna's mother does exhibit genuine protest in a number of ways. Like George Sand's Indiana, this woman, caught up in a relationship where the vast majority of power is vested in her spouse, has nonetheless developed "une force de résistance incalculable contre tout ce qui tendait à l'opprimer."[24] She employs discouraging facial expressions and blanket refusals to see him to indicate when Kaneie's visits are unwanted: "With a look on my face of *what are you doing here*, I did not welcome him in, and finding things very uncomfortable, he left" (KD: 81), and "since I did not go out from my inner chamber to meet him, it was painful for him to stay, so he left" (KD: 93-4). The resulting solitude can be a positive thing, as described by Canadian writer Alice Munro:

> The word "gone" seemed full of nothing but a deep relief and even an excitement—the excitement you feel when a door closes and your house sinks back to normal and you let yourself loose into all the free space around you.[25]

For Michitsuna's Mother, however, her husband's absence is just as problematic as his presence. Once the discouraged Kaneie takes his leave—and we are told that *tabitabi ni nari*[26], "this happened often" (KD: 81)—, our narrator is liable to suffer profoundly from the "after-space of emptiness" (to appropriate a phrase from British novelist A. S. Byatt). Forced to wait lengthy periods for him to visit again, however, more often than not by the time he arrives she is in no mood to be friendly or receptive to his advances.

The *Kagerô nikki* offers a wealth of scenes that show Michitsuna's Mother attempting to deal with her husband's presence, frequently viewed as having a negative impact on her boundaries, which she tries to protect by placing partitions between herself and Kaneie.[27] Nevertheless, the fact that these efforts at self-insulation accomplish little is explicitly recognized: "Just as he entered, I drew a rather poor screen in front of me; while it hid a bit of me, it was really quite useless" (KD: 253). One night, she goes so far as deliberately to refuse him access to her home: "just before dawn, […] there was a knocking on my gate. Thinking that it must be him, I felt wretched, and as I did not have the gate opened, he went off to that other place" (KD: 71)—the "other place" being the home of a recently acquired concubine. It demands no difficult feat of imagination to interpret this passage as a metaphor for a woman preserving her bodily integrity against harassing sexual overtures. The gate does not remain locked every night, however, and none of the omnipresent physical barriers—walls, curtains, screens, etc.—provide any effective defence in the long run.

It is instructive to consider Michitsuna no Haha's all-consuming hatred of the Machi Alley woman, one of Kaneie's mistresses, from the perspective of this female self-identification with her home. We have already discussed the fact that Heian women's names were not recorded, and that authors of this period have thus often come down through history solely by sobriquets referring to father or son. Yet another means of identifying these essentially nameless women is to refer to where they live, as is also the case, for example, with the *Genji*'s Rokujô no Miyasudokoro, or Rokujô Lady, whose designation can roughly be translated as "the lady of the sixth ward". Needless to say, this traditional practice in both real life and fiction supports the argument being put forward here.

By writing to the other woman while in his wife's house, or even by just leaving the letter lying about there for her to find, Kaneie has all but physically introduced his new lover into his wife's personal space. Figuratively speaking, through the mediation of the male, this rival has successfully invaded the sphere that the Mother of Michitsuna claims as exclusively her own, and this infidelity thus constitutes a violation of her territory in a way none of the others do.[28] Our narrator is under no illusion that she is the only woman in her husband's life; it is his betrayal of her spatial integrity on this occasion that shocks and deeply pains her.

Even when Kaneie absents himself from her house, he manages to give the impression of violating Michitsuna no Haha on an auditory level. She is forced to endure the rattling of wheels as her husband and his entourage travel to Machi Alley or elsewhere: "It was such a racket, so painful to my ears, and did he really have to pass right by my gate?" (KD: 81). The author obsesses about hearing him on the outskirts of her property, to the point where she "could not help hearing him clear his throat as he passed by" (KD: 77). The normal barriers are revealed as fatally permeable to tormenting noise: "at night, the sounds of the carriages rumbling outside would set my heart pounding" (KD: 195). Neither are they adequate to isolate her from rumours of his numerous affairs and her ensuing emotional devastation: "Hearing such whispered gossip, I feel so unhappy; the fall of each evening is just wretched" (KD: 79). The theme of aural violations of her spatial integrity as a particularly insidious form of torture is returned to time and time again in this diary. Considering how little visual input she regularly enjoys, locked away in what Morris terms "her twilight world of curtains, screens, and thick silk hangings"[29], it comes as no surprise that the Heian woman would privilege her other senses. One can easily picture the narrator sitting helplessly with her hands over her ears, trying to block out the sounds of Kaneie going elsewhere with his "usual ostentatious fuss" (KD: 229), or alternatively the dead silence that indicates he is not coming at all on a given evening, and share the "searing pain" (KD: 229) of her humiliation.

Tônori's courtship of the adopted daughter offers yet another example of the vulnerability of female space to libidinous males. He bombards their house with pleading correspondence until finally allowed to visit. Michitsuna's Mother attempts to keep him at bay and, denying she is even at home, leaves him sitting alone on the veranda. Nonetheless, the man is not so easily deterred; coming again another night, he makes his way past the veranda into the gallery room. In an implicit recognition of this act of trespass, Tônori pauses to have his respects conveyed to his hostess. Michitsuna no Haha acknowledges this delicacy with her reply, mocking and yet not ungracious: "He has my leave to come and speak in this place that he has been so interested in" (KD: 341), and invites him to sit with her son in an inner room. A lamp is lit for the two men, and Tônori talks with Michitsuna while the narrator remains discretely apart in a curtained enclosure: "Within, I made not a sound." Michitsuna no Haha eventually enters into conversation with the suitor herself, secure in the belief that the external light renders her invisible. Upon this guest's departure, however, she realizes that "the light placed on the veranda had gone out sometime before" and that she was thus exposed to his gaze (albeit as nothing more than a dim shadow) by a lamp "placed behind something within" (KD: 343). She is "appalled" by even this meagre visual violation, for (as we have already suggested) in her society, such seemingly inconsequential exposure is fraught with meaning:

> By the Heian period, the visibility of women was extremely restricted. For a woman to allow her face to be seen by a man was tantamount to accepting him as a lover. The romantic literary consequence was the *kaimami*, in which the unseen hero steals a glimpse of a lady through a gap in the fence or an opening in her curtains, a deed that could be termed visual rape.[30]

In an attitude common to all of her upper-class contemporaries, Michitsuna's Mother prides herself on normally allowing no breach whereby the voyeuristic male could surreptitiously invade her privacy.

While peeping toms are a constant danger, the complementary image of the woman within, seeing unseen, is used to full advantage by many Japanese writers of this time. This diary offers repeated descriptions of the narrator looking at the outside world from her home, an ox-drawn carriage, or the various temples and shrines she visits.[31] Ironically, despite the fact that real power is ineluctably enshrined in the masculine, a woman's segregated, interior position occasionally awards her possession of the gaze and thus the status of subject rather than object. Employing a pictorial example from European painting, Mostow cites another critic to the effect that, in the West, "specialized functions are assigned to each sex, pleasure in looking [...] broken between active (=male) and passive (=female)". Conversely, with the important exception of the *kaimami*, the male gaze is constantly being thwarted in Heian Japan, while the woman is frequently portrayed as unilaterally viewing males as they go about their business. Field makes the point that, with certain limitations, "women were always able to see—that is, look through and out"[32] the curtains, screens, and shades set up to conceal them. The degree of visibility the Heian female enjoyed depended, of course, on the lighting conditions and the willingness of gentlemen to come calling or even to pass within viewing range. Where women were passive possessors of a gaze, no harm was done; when they were recipients of the *kaimami* gaze, however, this routinely opened the door to male violation. Nonetheless, the view from within does claim the inner space, shielded from the external bustle and glare, as inherently feminine and somewhat secure. Invisibility reserves a certain amount of power for a woman, something that all of the heroines discussed in this thesis are wise enough not to surrender lightly.

During a subsequent visit by Tônori, he becomes emboldened enough to demand "the satisfaction of waiting on [Michitsuna no Haha] within [her] curtains" (KD: 347) and actually raises his hand to the said curtain with the intention of forcing his way inside. Numerous incidents of swooning females yielding passively before similar intrusions can be found throughout *Genji monogatari* and other works. It is an indication of our narrator's hard-earned sense of self that she is able to fend off her daughter's supposed suitor with, in contrast, astounding presence of mind. She manages to stand her ground precisely because she is conscious of it being **her ground**. Michitsuna's Mother defuses the situation by responding coolly to Tônori's impertinent proposition, and he has no choice but to apologize and beat a hasty retreat from the space both acknowledge to be hers.

Seeing to the overall maintenance of their wives' and concubines' homes comprised an important part of the responsibilities of Heian husbands and lovers. The unforgettable image of the unmarried and unattractive Suetsumuhana (also known as the Safflower Lady) sitting patiently amidst the ruins of her dilapidated mansion until a hero should chance to wander in and rescue her is used to great comic effect in the *Genji*. In real life, however, being abandoned to a life of squalor is no laughing matter. Accordingly, the narrator explicitly equates Kaneie's neglect of her property with neglect of her person:

> [...] my house, with no one to take it in hand, falls into a worse and worse state of disrepair. And that my husband can come and go without noticing a thing makes me feel especially forlorn; when I think that it must indicate a lack of deep regard for me, a thousand weeds of worry grow rank in my mind. (KD: 135)

The fact that he allows her "rundown house [to be] overrun with mugwort" (KD: 135) demonstrates how little this wife occupies Kaneie's thoughts. The disintegration can likely also be taken as a metaphor for the physical ageing that leads to the inevitable fading of a female's youthful beauty, and thus her devaluation in the patriarchal system. Coats points out that "the decay and destruction of architectural settings symbolizes for several characters the loss of power and prestige."[33] It is easy to imagine the impact such blatant neglect by the male would have for this woman and others whose identity is inextricably bound up with their homes.

In the latter part of Book One, Michitsuna no Haha pays a highly unconventional visit to her husband's home. This escapade has something of an element of titillation as the woman assumes the masculine role, venturing not only into the outside world but directly into the personal space of another. The pleasure she feels in travelling secretly to Kaneie's residence and herself acting the intruder is intense. On another, somewhat more straightforward level, naturally, the fact that he desires her presence so much that he has her brought to him is immensely flattering and satisfies her notion of ideal love. In a translator's note, Arntzen comments that "her visit to his place is clearly one of the most romantic episodes in her marriage."[34] Similarly, despite herself, the narrator indulges in romantic conjecture where she dreams of being asked to relinquish her autonomy entirely and share a dwelling with her husband: "*ah, truly, that splendid place he is building—but [...] even though he says, "I want to show it to you soon," things will turn out as they will*" (KD: 175). When this fantasy proves unfounded, however, she quickly acknowledges its inappropriateness for someone with her fierce territorial bent: "as for me, just as I thought, I am to remain where I am and I suppose that's best" (KD: 191).

It is important to bear in mind that, while the *shinden* (literally "sleeping hall", but used as a generic term for the residential architecture of the aristocracy) is in one sense a repressive domicile within which women are immured, it far more frequently serves in mid-Heian Japanese prose to represent a feminine refuge. Figuring prominently in nineteenth-century English novels written by women is a claustrophobic

> female figure [...] trapped—even buried—in the architecture of a patriarchal society, and imagining, dreaming, or actually devising escape routes, roads past walls [...] to the glittering town outside.[35]

Conversely, a woman in 10th-century Japan knows that she will find security of person only within the walls, in a withdrawal into her personal sphere. In her fascinating *The Splendor of Longing in the* Tale of Genji, Field makes the point that many examples of pilgrimages to Uji are metaphorically retreats to *uchi*, the inner self. Although she does once burst out of her home in a powerful image of escape (the start of her Ishiyama pilgrimage), Michitsuna no Haha generally opts instead to retreat farther inside some sort of enclosure in an effort to escape the ever-intrusive male. It is worth noting that when Kaneie offers to come and meet her after her pilgrimage to Hase, she responds with: "I am thinking of going [...] even deeper into the mountains" (KD: 157). This sentiment is repeated in Book Two: "I felt like withdrawing even deeper into the mountains" (KD: 243). While it may be overly literal to read these particular lines as clear statements of rejection, the very telling comment made during the aforementioned pilgrimage to Ishiyama Temple supports the general idea:

> "They say the entrance to that valley draws you in and you never get out. It's a dangerous place." Hearing things like this, I thought, *without even intending it, if only I could be drawn in and swallowed up*. (KD: 211)

A cloistered life, that of the nun she yearns to become, is consistently and increasingly desperately the objective sought by the narrator. Given that the interior is **her** space, it functions as sanctuary rather than imprisonment, offering Michitsuna's Mother some protection from the belligerent male gaze and behaviour to which she would otherwise be subjected by both family and strangers. The "sheer need to announce a departure from the world of men"[36] is an important part of her desire to retreat into a mountain temple and take the tonsure.

The following comment by Roselee Bundy is of interest in this context:

> In the city, the Mother of Michitsuna lived on the fringes of Kaneie's life, sequestered in her house. In her residence in the temple, she makes herself the center of all action and the story's main protagonist.[37]

In other words, by travelling to a temple outside the limits of a city that is the symbol of male power, she ironically gains centrality and importance in her own right. We will see in subsequent chapters of this thesis that both the Akashi Lady and Ôigimi have similar intuitive preferences for a life on the periphery. As Mostow points out, "Michitsuna no Haha's feeling of escape, when the mountains close from view the road back to the city—the locus of her unhappiness—, is almost palpable."[38] Nevertheless, this religious retreat provides merely a temporary solution to her situation, in that eventually she must return to her home in the capital.

Turning her back on the public world of Heian-kyô, which is not after all a world to which she is allowed any real access, our author privileges the interior. Her *nikki* "revolves around the private life, her only sphere of activity."[39] Not for the average married woman is the everyday "external, outward-gazing world of the male courtier, the active world of people coming and going, the arena of public poetry recitations at banquets, court events, and other social gatherings."[40] Instead, mid-Heian women's literature shares a common focus on "the hidden, inner space of a woman's sexual feelings"[41] as it examines the architecture of social relationships. As Lynne K. Miyake comments: "Sitting at home (or in her little niche provided for her at court), isolated, and often waiting longingly for her lover, the woman turned her gaze inward and recorded the workings of her soul."[42] Writers and readers have frequently been taught to consider the exterior, peopled by men, as hostile to the female half of the species, which helps explain why women authors have tended to turn their attention to the interior, domestic sphere. Of course, the equation home = refuge does not preclude the simultaneous associations of the life-sentence that must be served there. For, in allowing the male into her space, willingly or not, Michitsuna's Mother has simultaneously allowed him to take a place in her heart and life, and thus feels pain when he neglects her. Desire without power would seem inevitably to engender dissatisfaction. Our narrator is forced to spend years in a more or less solitary state of anticipation, hoping against hope that Kaneie will deign to come by. To a Western reader, the parallel with such characters as Austen's Bennet and Dashwood sisters, doomed to sit decorously in their drawing rooms awaiting suitors who may or may not appear, is striking.[43] Regardless, while the domestic sphere does play this contradictory role of jail and sanctuary, it is the latter that is privileged throughout this text.

Michitsuna no Haha struggles ceaselessly to reconcile her twofold desire: for love and the intimacy it offers, and equally for independence and self-respect. She plays repeatedly with the motifs of intrusion and retreat in the *Kagerô nikki*, creating scenes that depict variously successful threats to her spatial and corporeal integrity. Like the three characters from the *Genji monogatari* whom we will discuss in the chapters to come (i.e. the Akashi Lady, the Third Princess, and Ôigimi), she makes use of her physical surroundings to define and protect herself, eternally seeking to resist penetration of her boundaries by her husband and others. In exposing the lies—*soragoto*[44]—of wedded bliss, our author thereby creates her own aesthetic/creative space and, as Arntzen comments in her introduction, "writes herself to freedom through this record."[45] From beginning to end, interiority is unambiguously aligned with the feminine, and functions as a metaphor for the ever-vulnerable female body.

Making A Place for Herself:
The Akashi Lady's Constant Struggle

He put the Belt around my life—
I heard the Buckle snap—
And turned away, imperial,
My Lifetime folding up—
- Emily Dickinson, #273

All the world now is but a rack of threads
To twist and dwarf me into pettiness
And basely feigned content, the placid mask
Of women's misery.
- George Eliot, *Armgart*

In Akashi no Kimi (the Akashi Lady), we encounter for the first time in the *Genji monogatari* a heroine who, while succumbing to an arranged marriage, manages to a surprising extent to dictate the terms of her relationship with the outside world. A (comparatively speaking) lowly provincial maiden given to Genji against her will by an ambitious father, she should by rights remain merely a helpless pawn buffeted by forces beyond her control. All expectations are that such a woman will either be left in the hinterlands to pine over an absent husband or be forced to assume a subordinate role in his household. Yet the Akashi Lady firmly declines to accept either of these humiliating fates. Instead, when summoned to the capital to take her place among Genji's many women, she takes refuge in a family villa on the western outskirts of Heian-kyô. Here she bides her time and, eventually, by having stood fast against Genji's entreaties to join the other lesser wives at Nijô, succeeds in attaining a more elevated status and greater security at his new Rokujô mansion. The use of spatial distinctions and metaphors in her story is instructive in a study of her empowerment in general and her handling of interpersonal relationships in particular. Murasaki Shikibu has given us a heroine who must and indeed does resist strong centripetal forces seeking to draw her into a weak and dependent position. By strength of will, she conversely manages to exert a centrifugal force on none other than Genji himself, in that she forces him to venture out to a space clearly defined as her own.

An examination of how this woman's story progresses reveals five or six principal loci of action throughout her lifetime. First, she may have been born in the capital, prior to her father's acceptance of the position of provincial governor. Her next home would then have been the governor's estate at Akashi. Later, when her father has completed his gubernatorial term and taken vows, the family resides in the priest's home on the shore, which is where we find them when the Suma/Akashi sequence begins. Upon Genji's arrival, she is dispossessed of this space by her father, who has the main residence vacated for his guest's use and hustles her off to another house, this one nestled in the hills. This is the dwelling where she receives Genji's visits and in which he leaves her, several months' pregnant, once his exile comes to an end. Shortly following the birth of their daughter, Genji tries in vain to convince this wife to bring the infant from Akashi, which he views as unacceptably tainted with rusticity for any child of his, to his home in the capital. The lady rejects the displacement he offers as disadvantageous for herself, and instead has her father renovate a family villa west of the city, at Ôi, for herself and her mother and daughter. It is only years later that she finally agrees to be relocated to Genji's newly constructed Rokujô-in, where she is assigned to the "winter" quarter.

The reader watches as this woman is dragged out of obscurity, which has to this point provided comparative comfort and security, and thrust into the full and threatening glare of society as a lesser wife of a powerful man. Despite the unequivocal gains ultimately made by Akashi no Kimi, hers is a tragic story from start to finish. In Haruo Shirane's words:

> in the Genji every step along this outward path is a personal trial replete with humiliation and suffering. At no point is the Akashi lady allowed to escape from her past or from the awareness that she is inferior to Genji's other women, particularly Murasaki. To fulfil her destiny as the bearer of her family's fortunes, the Akashi lady must leave her family and home, face the uncertainty of upper-rank society and the capital, and finally be severed from her child.[1]

This "outward path" is not one that she would have chosen for herself. Richard Okada points out that the literature of the time contains many examples where "a man leaves the confining environment of the capital for the countryside, a signifier of strangeness and freedom."[2] The Akashi Lady herself has no desire to embark on a quest in the reverse direction; while the countryside does indeed represent freedom, it holds no strangeness for one raised there, being instead a comfortable and comforting home. It is her father's lifelong dream that she is obligated to fulfil by moving outside what has hitherto been her sphere, all the while recognizing that his ambitions are merely "inviting endless trouble."[3] Obsessed with the notion of obtaining such a highly ranked son-in-law, he all but throws her at Genji. In a wonderful bit of understatement, the narrator tells us that "it would be very sad for the girl, offered heedlessly to Genji, to learn that he did not want her" (TG: 261). Humiliation is always just around the corner once this [mis]adventure is set into play by the *paterfamilias*. Even the new bridegroom acknowledges that she is little more than a plaything for him; theirs is "a strange, fleeting encounter" entered into "for the sake of brief pleasure" (TG: 264). The men in her life, caught up in their own objectives and pleasures, never pause to take her interests into account. Akashi no Kimi must play the hand she is dealt, however, and she does so in an astonishingly masterful way.

Let us first examine the circumstances of her situation in Akashi. From any point of view, the daughter of an extremely wealthy man enjoys a highly privileged position. Murasaki Shikibu repeatedly indicates that, despite the rustic location of her upbringing, this young woman's accomplishments in such aristocratic arts as penmanship, music and poetry[4] are formidable. No expense has been spared to accord her the best possible education and the companionship of sophisticated (although admittedly somewhat faded) waiting women. She can honestly be characterized as a "real treasure [lying] buried in this unlikely spot" (TG: 258). As the beloved only child of the Akashi priest and his wife, she has always been showered with love, attention, and all the luxury that money can buy, as demonstrated in the following comments that briefly introduce us to the family early in the story:

> The house of the former governor—he took his vows not long ago, and he worries a great deal about his only daughter—the house is rather splendid. [...] He may not have done well in the city, but he could hardly have done better in Akashi. The grounds and the buildings are really very splendid. (TG: 86)

The care evidently taken with the family home mirrors that lavished on the Akashi Lady, rendering her an object worthy of universal admiration.

What is more, so far from the suffocatingly close world of the capital, she would likely have enjoyed greater than average freedom to move about and enjoy the beautiful scenery and expeditions to local sites. At least twice a year she goes on a pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi Shrine, for example. It has been pointed out that the Akashi priest lives with his family "not in the hills as one might think appropriate to a monk, but out in the open, close to the sea, the alleged reason being that excessive seclusion would be too taxing on his wife and daughter."[5] If her father has been living "out in the open", so too has Akashi no Kimi, at least compared to many a sheltered young noblewoman in Heian-kyô.

The arrival of Genji marks a startling turning point: this heroine is abruptly faced with an unprecedented threat to her security, in that he is the first male ever to be considered an acceptable suitor by her father. The threat is directed precisely at her independence and her spatial integrity. What is the first thing the priest does once he has convinced Genji to leave Suma in favour of Akashi? It is to remove his family from their usual home to a secondary house. And the seemingly offhand narratorial comment that "[i]n contrast to the house on the shore, this house in the hills had a certain fragility about it" (TG: 262) is significant. Genji's dangerous presence and his appropriation of what has always been her own space thus forces the daughter into increased seclusion within a less secure domain, imposing additional limitations on her movement while simultaneously compromising her safety. This enforced retreat into a supposedly less exposed shelter on the hillside provides her with only the most temporary refuge from male intrusion, in that her father has all along intended to entice the gentleman to her quarters.

Prior to Genji's appearance, then, Akashi no Kimi has enjoyed relative freedom and dignity as the most accomplished and wealthiest young woman in the region. Now, at the ripe old age of 22, her life is to change drastically. It is essential to bear in mind that marriage has likely always seemed an utterly unreal prospect to her. An intelligent and perceptive young woman almost past marriageable age, she cannot be unaware both that her father's plans for her future are extremely far-fetched—he is mocked early in the novel for harbouring "a very extravagant ambition" (TG: 86)—and that he will never compromise. The arrival in their remote part of the world of so important a nobleman as Genji would have been an absolutely unexpected quirk of fate, disrupting her hitherto sedate life and undermining her self-worth by highlighting, in contrast, her inferior social status.

The isolation in which the Akashi Lady has spent her youth is quite extreme. (Among the *Genji*'s heroines, only Tamakazura seems to have spent her youth in a similarly disadvantaged situation from the viewpoint of those who have always lived in the capital.) Although the wilds of Suma are for Genji a place of exile, to the Akashi Lady, her childhood home serves as a pleasant sanctuary. Here she has been protected from the vagaries of court life and the likelihood of humiliatingly obvious obscurity within the shining upper strata of Heian-kyô. Seclusion does after all have its own rewards. An anecdote about the reclusive Emily Dickinson cited by Adrienne Rich offers some insight in this respect:

> Her niece Martha told of visiting her in her corner bedroom on the second floor at 280 Main Street, Amherst, and of how Emily Dickinson made as if to lock the door with an imaginary key, turned and said: "Matty, here's freedom."[6]

In other words, freedom can be found in the absence of other distractions, cut off from those who would restrict one's activities and expressions of independence. Akashi no Kimi has indeed experienced freedom on a number of fronts—freedom from intrusions into her space, both physically and otherwise, and from consciousness of her social inferiority—in her little corner of the countryside, where the world appears to revolve around her. In her case, however, the option of withdrawal from social intercourse ceases to exist once Genji arrives on the scene and her father begins his obsequious and yet oddly self-important machinations to bring them together and advance his own goals.

Significantly and ironically, then, her father's ambition to marry her well or not at all has to date protected the Akashi Lady from the typical female fate of being used as a commodity in the sexual politics of the day. The oft-repeated joke is that she must either marry above her station or fling herself into the sea (an extreme example of the only potential destinies available to women within the marriage plot: euphoria or dysphoria). Given the circumstances, it does in fact seem likely that this "cloistered maiden, reserved for the king of the sea" (TG: 86) will never marry, and she is said to be "reconciled to her sad lot" (TG: 242). As luck would have it, however, Genji appears as if miraculously and is both drawn by tantalizing rumours about her and encouraged, in a far from subtle manner, by her father. Unlike Kaguya Hime, the mythical infant discovered and raised to lovely adulthood by an old bamboo cutter in the early-Heian *Taketori monogatari*, this woman is unable to elude suitors by simply flying back up to the moon. A mere mortal, she must instead deal with imposed wedlock and the range of problems that it poses. Although the priest sees marriage with Genji as symbolic of success and opportunity for his daughter, it in fact sets in motion a struggle in which her own desires and chance of success will be pitted against great odds.

The Akashi Lady is fully conscious that the tactics available to resist the husband chosen by her father are doomed to failure; she can do little more than forestall the inevitable (just as later she is to resist attempts to move her to his house in the capital). She has been given to Genji without consideration of her own wishes and it is only a matter of time before he will possess her. And yet our heroine does resist, if only half-heartedly. At first, she refuses to answer the initial poem he dashes off to her, a blow to the ego that leaves our hero "rather startled" (TG: 259). He is obliged to take more care with a second missive, and this time she is "badgered into setting something down" (TG: 259) by way of reply. (We see here a significant parallel with the reluctance displayed by Michitsuna no Haha, as discussed in our previous chapter.) In her poem, she refers to herself as *mada minu hito*[7], which ironically implies that the reverse is inevitable: that she will eventually be "seen" (or "known", i.e. possessed by the male). Nevertheless, until the shining Genji actually breaches her defences, she is *akenu yo ni*[8], in endless night. The darkness of the screened and curtained interior forms a protective envelope, which is intended to insulate her from violation, be it physical or merely visual. Striving to keep Genji at bay at least temporarily, "she was acutely embarrassed at any suggestion that he be invited nearer" (TG: 260). Perversely, however, such lack of encouragement serves as usual merely to heighten male interest: the "proud reserve in her answers [only] made him want more than ever to meet her" (TG: 259). While such feminine resistance is a common affectation of the time, when no well-bred lady would wish to appear over-eager to a suitor, the reader is given little or no justification for interpreting Akashi no Kimi's recalcitrance in the face of this liaison as less than genuine.

On the fateful night, her father himself leaves the door to her rooms ajar, giving Genji explicit permission to enter the daughter's private space: "The cypress door upon which the moonlight seemed to focus was slightly open" (TG: 262). On a metaphorical level, the moonlight can be interpreted as the full glare of the patriarchy, exposing her in her hiding place and revealing yet again how feeble are a woman's defences against the salacious male and those who would conspire to grant him access. Nonetheless, she "had resolved to admit him no nearer" (TG: 262-63) and does not yield without a struggle in their "contest of wills" (TG: 259 and again on 263). Yet again she postpones her destiny, fleeing into an inner chamber and bolting the door. Genji is momentarily stymied at this unexpected and hardly flattering rebuff: "How she could have contrived to bar it he could not tell, but it was very firmly barred indeed" (TG: 263). Of course, as we see throughout Heian literature, this barrier is as permeable as all the others to any even moderately resourceful man, and consummation is eventually achieved.

Genji's reactions to her reserve and self-defence strategies are deprecating. He comments rather snidely that this low-ranked young woman "seemed prouder and more aloof than the proudest lady at court" (TG: 259). His original expectation was even that she should come to his lodging: "He thought that he could hardly be expected to visit her" (TG: 260). Comments such as the aforementioned leave no doubt as to his dim view of her status, despite the fact that they are actually related matrilineally. Akashi no Kimi is herself well aware that the world would expect far greater enthusiasm on her side for this match: "She knew that rustic maidens should come running at a word from a city gentleman who happened to be briefly in the vicinity" (TG: 260) or at least be flattered enough to do all in their power to make him feel welcome. After all, as our hero points out: "even ladies so wellborn that they were sheltered from sudden visitors usually tried to make conversation when the visitor was Genji" (TG: 261). Regardless, this strong, independent-minded woman definitely "had her own ideas" (TG: 260) and will not passively be party to a violation of her physical, corporeal, or emotional space.

The isolation in which she has spent her formative years has perhaps been what has allowed the Akashi Lady to develop a strong sense of self. Her pre-eminent position as a big fish in a small pond has not exposed her to many circumstances in which she would have had to humble herself. (We see something quite similar with Ôigimi, who in the wilds of Uji has had to rely on herself and who has always played a pivotal role as mistress of the house and mother-substitute to Nakanokimi in Hachi no Miya's isolated household.) Even though Akashi no Kimi is faced with a marriage she did not choose, she is not stupid enough to make the mistake of offending the man who now holds her future in his hands: "Now she saw that the world could be very cruel. She managed to conceal her worries, however, and to do nothing that might annoy Genji" (TG: 264). The success of her self-protective subterfuge is demonstrated by the fact that her husband "was more and more pleased with her as time went by" (TG: 264), and upon their farewells "he now lamented that he would not see this Akashi again" (265)—merging her identity with that of her home. Nevertheless, the eventual decision to bring her to the capital appears to be only an afterthought. Their final meeting takes place at an earlier hour in the day than usual, allowing the hero his first really good look at the lady. His discovery of her "astonishingly proud beauty" makes him promise that "he would choose an opportune time to bring her to the city" (TG: 265). Yet she is not deceived as to the significance he attaches to such vows: "it was not unnatural that the parting should seem more real than the reunion" (TG: 266).

Violations of her spatial integrity are presented on numerous levels. Even during the period of absence between Genji's return to the capital and his undertakings for the Akashi Lady's relocation, he still manages constantly to invade her space. She is repeatedly reminded of him via the presence of his *koto*, for instance, which he has left behind in her home as a memento. Of course, the abandoned instrument is paralleled by the child he has also left behind, as yet another physical reminder, and one that will bind Akashi no Kimi to him for life. Further, a significant incident of intrusion takes place at the otherwise neutral site of Sumiyoshi. The reader is told that the priest's daughter has been making a pilgrimage to that shrine twice annually since childhood, and thus it must seem almost as familiar to her as her own home. The reader can imagine the overwhelming shock at encountering her long-absent spouse's ostentatious retinue without warning on this occasion, so grand that it makes her feel "as if she were gazing at a realm beyond the clouds" (TG: 282), leaving no doubt as to the unbridgeable gap between them. The fact that he hurts her feelings unwittingly only makes it worse, since this lack of consideration clearly underscores how inconsequential she is to him now. For Genji to have travelled so close geographically, to the very edges of, if not actually within, his wife's space, and yet declined to pay his respects to her constitutes a heart-rending snub.

Like Ôigimi, whose case will be studied in the last chapter of this thesis, the Akashi Lady resists a centripetal force seeking to move her from the "frontier" to the capital. After all, three years have passed between Genji's return to the city and his preparations to receive her there, and this has been ample time to prove how little she counts in his life. She refuses to delude herself: "she did not belong to his world, and she would only be inviting grief if she pretended that she did" (TG: 260). As a metaphor of their incompatible stations in life, the narrator tells us that even when together at Akashi, their "two houses [were] some distance apart" (TG: 263). Most members of the household view an immediate move to Heian-kyô as an inherent good, a sign of great fortune. (The one obvious exception is her mother who with maternal protective instincts acts as a cautionary chorus, urging prudence to her husband in an attempt to cushion their daughter from a hostile world.) Akashi no Kimi's reluctance to move involves more than readily understandable anguish and fear about leaving her home, the only world she has ever known, for a new and uncertain life elsewhere. To women such as herself and Ôigimi, living on the periphery of society ironically allows them to play the central role in their own existence. Moving in an inward direction entails giving up this centrality and becoming in turn a peripheral figure to their husband's life. A useful metaphor is that they have been the sun in a minor solar system, and are now faced with the prospect of becoming a (very) small planet, or even one of countless moons, in a much larger one. Such a shift in a woman's circumstances seems necessarily designed to deprive her of any autonomy that she may currently possess.

The less than devoted husband nonetheless rather peremptorily orders her to make the move: "You must be prepared to leave Akashi. It cannot be otherwise" (TG: 277). Akashi no Kimi stalls for time intelligently, taking care as always not to offend: "her reply was obedient but indecisive" (TG: 284). Faced with Genji's insistence and the blandishments of her family and retainers, it has become hardly feasible for her to remain where she is. Neither is she willing to move to Heian-kyô at this time. So what strategies are available to her? Rather than digging in her heels, which all agree is not an option, or passively giving in, which would doom her to a life spent dependent on the (waning) kindness of Genji, anxiously awaiting what are likely to be quite infrequent visits, exposed to public humiliation by his obvious preference for other of his women, she lights upon a third alternative. The compromise struck unilaterally is a brilliant one, whereby this woman gains much more than she sacrifices. Even Genji is pleased, after a brief feeling of annoyance, although perhaps our hero is not as perceptive as he would like to think:

> Genji had been puzzled and upset by his lady's reluctance to move. He did not want people to associate his daughter with Akashi. Presently the Oi house was ready and he learned of it. Now he understood: the lady had been frightened at the thought of the great city. These precautions had been reasonable and indeed laudable. (TG: 319)

The Akashi Lady has once again shown how skilled she is at making the best of a bad situation and protecting her own interests.

If we examine what the Ôi property represents, we note that this residence had once belonged to her maternal grandmother. Therefore, Akashi no Kimi moves from her father's house, symbolising the locus of the male, where father and suitor have joined forces to chisel away at any possibility of her self-determination, to a sort of haven or refuge passed along matrilineally. She is in effect solidifying her position by retreating to an essentially female space (which fact Murasaki Shikibu highlights by having only the mother and daughter accompany the heroine there, with her father remaining behind). The three generations of women therefore create something of a no-man's land, independent of both father and husband.

Akashi no Kimi ends up spending four years at Ôi. While within commuting distance from the capital, it is still considered a deeply isolated location, as evidenced in the following lines that she writes upon the departure of her child's nurse:

Yuki fukami
Yama no michi wa
Harezu tomo[9]

(Seidensticker's translation (TG: 333) of the entire poem reads as follows:

"These mountain paths
Will be closed by snow and clouds
Do not, I pray you, let your traces be lost.")

The virtually impassable haze mentioned here as blocking the snowy mountain path may well provide a comforting substitute for the darkness earlier dissipated by the too glaring light cast by Hikaru Genji's presence. He is of course impatient for her soon to take the next step, universally perceived as inevitable, and accept the subservient role that he is willing to grant her at Nijô. Once again she skilfully parries his arguments:

> "You are still too far away," he said to the lady, "and it will not be easy for me to see you. I have a place in mind for you."
>
> "When I am a little more used to it all." Which was not unreasonable of her. (TG: 324)

This temporary abode is located in a boundary zone, neither exactly in the hinterlands nor in the capital itself. Paralleling the six months Tamakazura spends on the city outskirts before herself entering Genji's domain, it accords our heroine some breathing space, representing a period of hesitancy and isolation necessary to position herself more securely for the next stage in her career. While the centre (personified by the elite society of Heian-kyô) must be the ultimate goal for a woman who has (voluntarily or involuntarily) embarked upon a quest for worldly success, how true it is that only fools rush in. This self-imposed intermission between the start of her career and its logical conclusion is another vital stage in the progression and structure of her story, allowing her time to marshal her forces for a more or less quietly triumphant entry into the capital. If we recollect the farce that must be played out when another unknown "discovery" in the *Genji monogatari*, Tô No Chûjô's long-lost daughter, the Lady of Omi, makes her rapid and painfully embarrassing emergence into life in the capital, the potential danger to one's pride of an overly hasty transfer from periphery to centre becomes obvious.

Further, it cannot be overemphasized that by remaining in her own, independent household, supported by her family's wealth, she forces Genji to pay a form of obeisance unique to the Heian period. Normally, as we have discussed above, only an unsupported, lower-ranked female would take up residence with the husband. A woman with any decent level of status would remain with her own maternal family and be visited by her husband in a *kayoikon*-type marriage. The Akashi Lady exploits this tradition to her full advantage. As Shirane comments: "Genji commutes to her distant residence [at Ôi] in a duolocal manner, as he did earlier with Aoi, thereby showing her the kind of respect he gave his former wife."[10] During this period, if he wants to see his wife and child, Genji is obliged to make the effort of travelling to her territory. And by virtue of stubbornly holding out for those four years on the outskirts, what Akashi no Kimi does is in effect position herself to gain what would otherwise be denied her but which she firmly believes is her due: a respectable and respected place among Genji's women. After all, while not as well-born as the others, she is among the wealthiest and most accomplished, in addition to being mother to a future empress. The point has been made elsewhere that:

> By having rejected entry into the Eastern Pavilion, she wins one of the four quarters in the utopian Rokujôin, even though it is the least of them, the northeastern "winter" section. At the same time, since she comes with her family resources, no doubt contributing to the sustenance of the entire establishment, she maintains a distinctly independent status.[11]

This is without a doubt a heroine who knows how to play the game, forcing the male to capitulate to what always remain unverbalized demands.

While she does fight tirelessly for an appropriate measure of respect from Genji and his vast and varied household, Akashi no Kimi is never foolish enough to entertain the hope of gaining supremacy over Murasaki. Indeed, the futility of any such dream is drilled into both heroine and reader time and time again. Field posits convincingly that, far from being naïve about her chances, Akashi no Kimi even on her marriage night displays full consciousness of what her relationship with Genji does and does not offer a woman of her status:

> In contrast to Genji's easy talk of intimacy, [the Akashi lady's] poem is heavy with the timeless knowledge of young women and the particular sensibility of a Heian provincial governor's daughter that in a few moments life would be forever changed—a rather different perception of fate from the sort that has Genji and her father in its thrall.[12]

At the initial mention of this character, during the well-known Rainy Night passage early in the novel, the narrative quickly shifts from discussion of the Akashi Lady's admirable qualities and her laughable father to Genji's discovery of the young Murasaki. As well, in the midst of the Akashi courtship, the hero finds himself again and again thinking of how much he misses his principal wife. And, as if to remove all doubts as to the inferior status of the new love interest, when Genji is making his way to Akashi no Kimi's house on their bridal night, when he should by all that is right and proper be consumed with thoughts of her and her alone, at least for a few hours, his mind is actually dwelling on the beloved back in the capital:

> The lady's house was some distance back in the hills. The coast lay in full view below, the bay silver in the moonlight. He would have liked to show it to Murasaki. (TG: 261-2)

Insultingly, thoughts of Murasaki and the capital repeatedly interfere with Genji's concentration on his new bride: the "sight of the Akashi lady only brought new longing for the other lady" (TG: 264). Her hopelessly second-class status is constantly reinforced by such juxtapositions, which alert the reader to the dangers of humiliation that she will be exposed to if she does not take exceptional care to carve out a secure place for herself.[13] The other woman is, again and again, figuratively introduced into her own private space, and the space that should be hers within her husband's thoughts, in a violation that is none the less painful for being metaphorical (just as we saw with the Machi Alley woman in the *Kagerô nikki*). It is no wonder that Akashi no Kimi resists Genji's attempts to move her into his residence, where such contrasts in affection could not help but become more visible and thus more hurtful.

This reluctance to move to the capital does not apply to their daughter, however. Whereas the Akashi Lady's future security is made by her resisting (or at least delaying) a move to the capital, it is clear to everyone involved that the child's prospects depend on arriving there as early in her young life as possible, so that she can live out her destiny of wedding the crown prince. Abe Akio has been cited as making "a useful distinction between the story of the Akashi princess, which is primarily political, and the story of the Akashi Lady, which is predominantly private."[14] (Indeed, the stories of all the main female characters in the *Genji* are predominantly private, as Murasaki Shikibu insightfully examines the effect of Heian aristocratic customs on the women who live them.) Their daughter is the greatest piece of social currency that either she or Genji possess, and such a valuable asset must be carefully managed. After innumerable delays on Akashi no Kimi's part, Genji finally puts his foot down: "This cannot continue. [...] You must move nearer" (TG: 331), and while she herself is allowed to remain temporarily at Ôi, she is forced to concede the daughter. The child's destiny, ineluctably bound up with its father's, is ready to be played out and must now be given proper consideration: "it would not do for her daughter to grow up in the remote countryside, a child of the shadows. So she could not tell Genji that he had behaved badly and be finished with him" (TG: 318). The Akashi Lady, herself preferring the shadows, will not accompany the girl, however: "the wiser course seemed to be to keep her distance. If she were nearer she would be vulnerable, too easy a target for the other ladies" (TG: 338). Regardless of how it pains her to have the child raised by someone else, Akashi no Kimi is well aware that this is an opportunity that cannot be missed. What it costs her in emotional devastation is made perfectly clear. For the first time, our heroine is depicted as literally and metaphorically stepping outside the relatively safe interior places she is always constructing for herself: "It was not like her to expose herself so. She preferred the inner rooms of the house" (TG: 333). But for her daughter (and indirectly her father, since this action is but another step toward fulfilment of his ambitions) the sacrifice must and will be made. In handing the child over to Murasaki's foster care and sponsorship, she provides her daughter with the security essential to a successful career.[15]

Only once she has consolidated her position of importance as mother to the future Akashi princess does Akashi no Kimi agree to join Genji's household. Even once his new mansion is built and she is accorded suitable apartments there, she awaits the proper moment in the spirit of self-preservation that has become second nature to her: "The Akashi lady thought she should wait until the grand ladies had moved and then make her own quiet move" (TG: 386). And the tactics she has employed to raise her family's status on behalf of her own father and child prove eminently successful: "With an eye on his daughter's future, Genji took great care that nothing about her retinue or the appointments of her rooms suggest inferiority"

(TG: 386). Akashi no Kimi has jockeyed for a respectable position for the very outset of their relationship, and she has at last won the struggle.

The association of the Akashi Lady with the winter quarter of the Rokujô-in is no accident. Her strength of character and singleness of purpose are such that she is often viewed as cold, in other words, rarely if ever governed by her emotions or seduced by either sexual temptation or male guile. Akashi no Kimi has been characterised as "severely practical"[16], and this quality stands her in good stead as she negotiates her way through the pitfalls inherent to any relationship with Genji. At no point in her married life is she given much occasion to consider her personal needs and wishes. (If it were only her own inclinations she had to follow, it is likely that she would have remained secluded and virginal at Akashi.) Rather, first her father's ambition and later her daughter's destiny always take precedence. Nonetheless, every step this character takes does express her determination to assert some control over her relationship with the outer world.

Throughout *Genji monogatari*, Murasaki Shikibu reveals great sensitivity to the plight of lower-ranked and otherwise vulnerable women, likely because she herself enjoyed a less than powerful position. It has been pointed out elsewhere that:

> As the daughter of a lesser, and often unemployed, provincial governor, Murasaki Shikibu was fortunate in being summoned to court to serve Empress Shôshi. But as her diary and private poetry collection suggest, the honor of joining the company of the elite was a mixed blessing, for though it gave her an opportunity to display her talents, it also created a sense of alienation and vulnerability, much as it does for the Akashi lady.[17]

Marian Ury has likewise underscored that the *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* offers evidence of its author's own "dislike of intrusions into her personal space."[18] From the outset, while Akashi no Kimi's primary goal has been to re-establish her family's position as dictated by her father's overweening ambition, this is always tempered by a desire to preserve her self and her independence and dignity. For women throughout Heian literature: "The enemy to be guarded against above all was 'a sense of inferiority'."[19] Never does she exhibit any ambition to advance her own prospects nor any desire to hold sway over the other women in Genji's life. This forms an interesting contrast to the self-avenging Rokujô, another determined and independent female character. As Field rightly states: "No one is less likely to manifest herself as a vengeful spirit than the Akashi Lady, even though her sensitivity to her own position is not a whit less acute than that of the Rokujô Lady."[20] Upon her father's death, the Akashi Lady tries to make sense of why he had thrown her at Genji in the first place:

> She now understood: he had put his faith in a dream as the true and sacred word. It had become an obsession, and a source of great unhappiness and embarrassment for the lady herself. She had feared at times that she must go mad—and now she saw that the cause of it all was one insubstantial dream. (TG: 575)

Her fate has thus always been tinged with both the divine and the absurd, and yet has been nonetheless unavoidable.

The lines by Dickinson cited at the start of this chapter deal with possession and the stranglehold of restrictions that frequently arise from entanglement with the aggressive and powerful male. In this story among others, Murasaki Shikibu proves herself to be intensely concerned with the coping strategies employed by women as they negotiate their way through the minefield of courtship and marriage. While the Suma/Akashi sequence is on the surface the story of Genji's exile from the Court, the perceptual viewpoint shifts rapidly from the hero to the heroine of this tale within a tale. It is the personal, not the political, that interests our author most. To quote Shirane once again:

> Instead of focusing on family glory, the splendours of court life, or the powers of the divine, as the traditional [*tsukuri monogatari*] narratives normally do, Murasaki Shikibu dwells, as the *Kagerô nikki* does, on the woman's suffering and sacrifice and reveals from within, as it were, the pressures of society and politics on the [**female**] individual.[21]

Murasaki Shikibu's focus is never society and politics *per se*, but rather how these shape and impact on the individual, for better or worse. It is enlightening to examine the metaphorical process at work as our author describes the eternal play of inclusion and exclusion, and how and why her female characters may consciously opt for one or the other strategy at different times in their careers. Thrown into a relationship where the social distance between the partners creates an inescapable and dangerous power imbalance, Akashi no Kimi is forced into a fight for survival, as she sets out alone to define and erect barriers around herself that will be as resilient as possible. Even the Akashi priest, who should naturally serve as paternal protection for his vulnerable daughter, fails her by revealing, from the very start of this episode, his membership in the patriarchy as he joins forces with Genji to deny her any true control over place or self. She must make great personal sacrifices on behalf of her family, because that is the role she has been given. Through her carefully planned struggle for a respectable place in a world that she would not have chosen for herself, the Akashi Lady does eventually succeed in transforming her husband's blatant condescension into respectful (albeit ultimately devoid of passion or personal interest) consideration. In so doing, she constructs a personal space at the intersection of her life and Genji's that ends up being astonishingly secure and independent.

Seeking Refuge in Prepubescent Space:
The Strategy Employed by the Third Princess

> *So back I drew tiptoe from that Princess,*
> *Because it was too soon, and not my part,*
> *To start voluptuous pulses in her heart,*
> *And kiss her to the world of Consciousness.*
> - Wilfred Owen, "The Sleeping Beauty"

> *There had been no clashing of temper between Dorothea and her husband since that little explosion in Rome, which had left such strong traces in her mind that it had been easier ever since to quell emotion than to incur the consequences of venting it.*
> - George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

Spatial metaphors as a means of illustrating the quest for mastery of one's own destiny have, in the cases of Michitsuna's Mother and the Akashi Lady, primarily involved architectural and geographical features. With the Third Princess (also known as Onna San no Miya and Nyosan) and with Ôigimi, we now turn to characters who enjoy even less opportunity for the exercise of control over macro space (i.e. the external, physical world). These latter two women lack the ability, for a variety of reasons, to select or even manage either their domestic space or those who will have access to it. Accordingly, both adopt psychological tactics in what is in effect a more subtle bid to direct the way in which others, particularly males, relate to them. Whether one employs walls, doors and screens in seeking to safeguard personal integrity, or renders oneself unapproachable through the assumption of an unappealing demeanour—one that does not bend to the rules of romance—the purpose and result is similar. To put it another way, an identical battle for self-determination may take place in either the bedroom or the mind.

There is nothing arbitrary about the fact that the *Genji monogatari* insists repeatedly on the Third Princess being *mada ihakenaki*[1] and *osanaki*[2], terms that Seidensticker generally renders as "a mere child" (TG: 554 and *passim*). When first introduced, this character is indeed only some thirteen years old (which, nonetheless, was a marriageable age in the Heian period), but even as the years pass, her immaturity continues to be emphasized. What should logically be a transient state, merely a stopping point between infancy and adulthood, the Third Princess seeks to translate into a permanent refuge. Murasaki Shikibu is here exploring yet another possibility for coping with the threat of male violation of the female self: that of retreating deep within childhood space and thus attempting to render oneself ineligible for the mating game. Behaving in an infantile manner, despite the fact that "of course in point of years she was not a child at all" (TG: 558), the princess is in fact refusing to step within the confines of a patriarchal definition of woman and be exploited. This heroine and the rationale behind her eternal childishness have rarely been given the attention they deserve. She has been described as "literarily uninteresting and [one, who] comes to life only through Kashiwagi's illicit attachment"[3] and "an uninteresting little thing [who] turns out to be [...] nothing like the young Murasaki. It never occurs to Genji to fall in love with her."[4] In this chapter, however, we will argue that the Third Princess' employment of a deliberate and subversive strategy to avoid drawing attention to herself is actually of great interest. By denying her adult sexual role, she actively discourages men from falling in love with her and thus creates a refuge, albeit temporary, from a host of unwelcome masculine attentions.

This unlikely heroine makes unremitting attempts to define herself as asexual or, more accurately, pre-sexual. The logic of this strategy is revealed by the disaster that results from the one occasion where her femininity is accidentally revealed. It is not in fact Kashiwagi's attachment that brings her to life, but rather her inevitable exposure as a living, breathing, sexual woman that spurs his attraction on to its fated end. This begs the question of what forces have hitherto been smothering her, forcing her to lock herself away in a sort of suspended sexuality. Indeed, the events leading to and following this famous episode constitute an insightful examination of a unique strategy of resistance. The point of this woman's story is that the men in her life (father, husband, and self-styled lover) have utter control over her destiny, which fact is firmly underscored by the author's tactic of denying the Third Princess any voice until quite late in her story.[5] She indeed poses as a "passive and virtually speechless"[6] non-heroine. Nonetheless, this mute and outwardly childish character serves a specific and very useful purpose: to demonstrate the menacing stranglehold that a predatory patriarchy can have on women.

Our author has deliberately placed the Third Princess within an inarticulate space, where others feel authorized to speak on her behalf as adults would for a child. This woman is significantly objectified, accessible almost exclusively via male readings (e.g. by the Suzakû emperor, Genji, and Kashiwagi) or the occasional and usually complicit female reading (e.g. by Murasaki and Kojijû). Field comments that the princess is "always closed to us"[7], and this statement is accurate most of the time. In few cases is the Third Princess accorded a voice to speak for herself, and therefore the sympathetic reader who wishes to hear her story must read between the lines and take with a grain of salt the frequently distorted or self-serving attempts by other characters to interpret her behaviour and wishes. A verse written by Izumi Shikibu, a contemporary of Murasaki Shikibu, is instructive here:

Ikade ka wa	How could you see,
Maki no toguchi o	When the pine-wood gate
Sashinagara	Was locked and barred
Tsuruki kokoro no	Whether or not
Are nashi o min	My heart was cold?[8]

Just because she has been rendered silent does not mean that the woman is neither thinking nor observing. Given that all the heroines of the *Genji monogatari* are their author's daughters, each one has a role to play in the greater message delivered by the novel as a whole. Indeed, the very fact of the Third Princess having almost no voice ironically draws attention to her. As we will examine later in this chapter, it may well be that her thoughts and observations are literally **unspeakable** within Heian society. The author of the *Genji* was certainly not unaware that her own position as a respected writer, a woman to whom both sexes listened eagerly (at least where her poetry and prose were concerned), was relatively unique. On this level, the princess represents the more typical Heian female deprived of any space where she can express her socially disregarded and possibly unacceptable desires. A woman of her high social standing was under even greater restrictions as to proper behaviour than one from the middle ranks or lower. By means of her virtually voiceless presence, in any case, the princess underscores the oppressively patriarchal nature of their society, and implies a challenge of the fairness of a system where the majority of women are regularly rendered mute and invisible.

Our heroine's objective is both physical and psychological refuge within a fictive eternal childhood via metaphorical isolation as an alternative to exploitive adult relationships. In addition to remaining mute, the Third Princess opts for as marginal a role as possible, and how better for a princess to become marginal to the sophisticated and rather libertine Heian court than by remaining *wakabitamaheri*[9], eternally prepubescent? She seeks the sidelines of marriage politics, avoiding anything that could remotely be taken for womanly flirtatiousness: *haji nado mo shitamahazu*[10], "[s]he did not seem shy before [Genji]," instead exhibiting a most unromantic "openness and freedom from mannerism" (TG: 558). She manages to disarm her groom by not responding according to the prescribed mores for young newlywed females.[11] Even following consummation of their marriage, the Third Princess continually seeks to (re)define herself as a pre-sexual entity by clinging to an infantile demeanour (*chigo no omogiraisenu kokochi shite*[12]). Despite its fictitiousness, this false childhood does serve as a kind of temporary sanctuary from men. Genji finds himself rather bored with his unsophisticated and unaccomplished new bride and is thus dissuaded from frequent sexual contact and extended social intercourse with her.

The Third Princess belongs to a venerable line of women in life and letters who behave in a so-called inappropriate manner. Needless, to say, such rebels exist in all countries, cultures, and time periods. While it has always been perilous for the weaker sex to rebel against societal expectations[13], some consciously or subconsciously choose to risk incurring the scorn or potentially even violence of those around them by doing so. Most famous of these subversive female characters in Classical Japanese literature may be the late-Heian, comic "Lady Who Loved Insects", who refuses to conform to restrictive and arbitrary customs (such as shaving her eyebrows and blackening her teeth), thus rendering herself unattractive to potential suitors:

> "What a sad case!" thought the Captain. "If only she took an ordinary amount of trouble with herself she really would not be bad-looking."[14]

It is surely no accident that this "strange girl"[15] prefers to tend to her caterpillars and snails in solitude, limiting communication with other humans to conversations "through a chink in the half-raised blinds."[16] She turns the tables on those who would dictate her behaviour by citing a common proverb that ghosts and girls should be neither seen nor heard, which sentiment suits her strong preference to be left alone. Yet another psychological sister to the Third Princess can be found in an anecdote related in the Muromachi-period *Tsurezuregusa*:

> The daughter of a certain lay priest in the province of Inaba was reputed to be very beautiful, and many suitors asked for her hand, but this girl ate nothing but chestnuts, and refused to touch rice or other grains. Her father therefore declined the men's proposals, saying, "Such a peculiar person is not fit to be married."[17]

To be deemed unmarriageable (for whatever reason) provides an obvious escape from the sexual exploitation often experienced by women in a patriarchal society. Unluckily for the Third Princess, however, her father will soon become a priest and has no alternative means of providing for his own "peculiar" daughter but to marry her off. As Field notes, husband-to-be Genji has always determined the identity to be assumed by his women, unilaterally assigning them what he deems to be appropriate clothing and living quarters. Similarly to both young ladies mentioned above (although exercising more caution by choosing, in place of truly aberrant behaviour, a role that during her actual childhood years was fully acceptable but one that has now become developmentally inappropriate), the Third Princess expresses her opposition and asserts her will by refusing to play along.

The refusal is passive rather than active, of course, given that resisting the male in a more obvious sort of rebellion would expose women to certain risk of social opprobrium and loss of *ushiromi* (social backing or support). Just like the Akashi Lady before her, the princess has been irrevocably placed by her father within Genji's sphere, and the husband has now become her sole defender. There is general acknowledgement that she is now utterly reliant on his goodwill, which fact gives the father pause:

> He said several times that Genji must not think about him but must follow his own judgment in his treatment of the princess. He could not even so hide his disquietude. She was so very young and defenceless. (TG: 559)

The Suzaku emperor worries ceaselessly about his favourite daughter, whom he rightly perceives as ill equipped to defend herself. On this level, he (described on TG: 558 as "not a virile sort of man"[18]) can be read as a female sympathizer who would like to arm his child against the hostile forces present in their world, but does not know how to go about it. Even the best possible training in the accepted womanly arts seems to have left many of her literary predecessors and peers in a sad and dependant position, as we see in the cases of the other female characters examined in this thesis. By default, in what appears to be almost a capitulation to the hopelessness of any woman's situation, she has been allowed to remain in the unschooled space of childhood much longer than is usual.

Ury has written that "much of the *Genji* can be read as an indictment of female incompetence. The character of Onna San no Miya is a prime example."[19] Yet the unprecedented incompetence displayed here can be interpreted as a self-defence strategy consciously or even unconsciously employed by a woman who, recognizing her own impotence to make a place for herself in a frequently hostile world, thus withdraws from the game. The princess' childishness and lack of the usual accomplishments for a girl of such high socio-economic status shock Genji. When he receives the first piece of correspondence from his bride, he sees that it "was every bit as bad as he had feared, scarcely even a child's hand—[… the letter was] evidence of almost complete uselessness" (TG: 558). The reader should, however, consider what advantage the typical ladylike talents would be to someone whose objective is precisely to avoid attracting the male. By contriving to appear a useless addition to a man's harem, she can perhaps avoid having much to do with him. With her insipid and unworldly behaviour, she succeeds in rendering herself uninteresting to her new spouse, and thus in shielding herself from many of the usual attentions. It is important also to note that her father has not provided her with the sophisticated and talented retinue one would expect for the daughter of a retired emperor, but merely a group of often similarly infantile playmates:

> Nor did there seem to be women of substance among her attendants. […] Genji might not be enormously pleased at the sight of all these little girls at their games the whole day through, but he was by nature neither an uncharitable man nor a reformer, and he did not interfere. (TG: 580)

Therefore, there is virtually nothing about this princess or her attendants to attract and hold any man's attention.

Genji is far from an unsympathetic husband, of course, especially for his time. The 19th-century American writer Kate Chopin writes ironically of everyone "agree[ing] that Mr. Pontellier was the best husband in the world. Mrs. Pontellier was forced to admit that she knew of none better."[20] Likewise, for the Third Princess, it is not a matter of desiring a more suitable choice from among the pool of potential marriage partners, but rather of recognizing that Heian relationships are by definition unbalanced and exploitive. On most occasions, the Shining One accepts his wife's child-like demeanour with reasonable grace, even though it does reflect badly on him: "He was embarrassed that the princess should be so immature for her years" (TG: 564). It never occurs to him to inquire as to the causes of this peculiar conduct. The fact that the eponymous hero of this tale remains so completely oblivious in the face of the Third Princess' insubordination is rather a damning comment on the self-involved Heian male. Regardless, although Genji cannot help but be disappointed by the his new wife, he charitably does his best to insulate her from inevitable and unflattering societal judgement:

> He did not want to have secrets from Murasaki, and yet he did not want her to see the princess's hand, at least for a time. To display the princess in all her immaturity seemed somehow insulting. (TG: 558)

The *Kagerô nikki*, for example, reveals that not all gentlemen of the period were so delicate when it came to exposing the infelicitous attempts of some of their less gifted female correspondents.[21] As we will see with Ôigimi's reaction to Kaoru in the next chapter of this thesis, the princess does not reject the quite chivalrous Genji *per se*, rather she rejects all members of the male sex.

When she so chooses, the Third Princess clearly reveals that she is not after all as socially or aesthetically incompetent as is commonly thought:

> The Third Princess, upon being informed that she was to be hostess to such a gathering, put her little girls into robes of a rich yellowish green, white cloaks lined with green, and jackets of magenta. Though there was nothing overdone about this finery, the effect was of remarkable richness and elegance. (TG: 600)

Although still reluctant to draw attention to herself, she here demonstrates acquisition of one of the vital and highly sophisticated talents of a Heian noblewoman. This sartorial accomplishment is echoed in the musical skill she also displays at the "feminine concert of strings" (TG: 599). Her husband does not hide his fears that she is likely to embarrass them all: "Worried lest the Third Princess seem inadequate, Genji himself tuned her seven-stringed koto for her" (TG: 600). Regardless, we learn that

> the Third Princess was not quite a complete master [of the instrument] yet, but her playing had an assurance that did justice to her recent labours. Her koto took its place very comfortably among the other instruments. [...] she had acquired a most admirable touch." (TG: 602)

On this occasion, in fact, she appears to forget herself and inadvertently drops her habitual air of puerile uselessness:

> Genji glanced at the Third Princess. [...] Hers was not a striking sort of beauty, but it was marked by very great refinement and delicacy. [...] One knew that she was the most wellborn of ladies. (TG: 602)

Her koto playing, which we can take as standing metaphorically for her overall behaviour that day, "had a fine sureness and lucidity. One looked in vain for signs of immaturity" (TG: 605). In fact, the normally incompetent princess "gave evidence of real understanding", and those in attendance "can scarcely believe it is the same person" (TG: 606). By the evening, however, when Genji pays one of his now infrequent visits to her quarters, the princess has again retreated to a more childish, safer space: "Immersed in her music, she was as youthful as ever. It did not seem to occur to her that anyone might be less than happy with her presence" (TG: 609). Hiding behind the boundaries defined by inconsequential, rather tedious child once again—*wakaku nanigokoro naki mi-arisama*[22], "very young in her ways and very innocent" (TG: 541)—she seeks to deflect sexual or other interest.

The act is not solely for the male's benefit, of course. Behaving in a blatantly juvenile manner also means that Murasaki will eventually judge her to be no significant threat, even though the princess is outwardly acknowledged as Genji's principal wife in her stead. Unlike either Michitsuna's Mother or the Akashi Lady, for instance, the Third Princess is denied the luxury of living for some time in a separate residence belonging to the maternal line, and is instead promptly moved into the Rokujô harem. At the mercy of her husband's other women, therefore, it behoves the new wife to act submissively in a bid to enlist their protection and avoid hostilities.[23] This fact is explicitly recognized by her father, who writes directly to Murasaki: "I fear I have left an unthinking child on your hands. Do please be tolerant" (TG: 559). There is no way of predicting whether the beloved princess' more experienced and ambitious rivals will be kind, of course, and he feels responsible for having placed her into a veritable lion's den: "He should not have left his artless daughter in a house where the other ladies were so subtle" (TG: 559). Fortunately, the first among these other ladies, like Genji himself, cannot help but take on a pseudo-parental role with respect to the new addition to their household:

"Murasaki then went to see the Third Princess. Yes indeed—still very much a child. Murasaki addressed her in a motherly fashion" (TG: 565). This nominally demoted wife can afford to be generous, reassured of her secure place in Genji's affection and esteem, once the *kita no kata* (literally translating as "person of the North", but used to designate a man's first or most important wife) is proven to be no true challenger:

> She left the princess feeling, in a childish, half-formed way, that this was a kind and gentle lady, not so old in heart and manner as to make a young person feel uncomfortable. (TG: 565)

We see that the purported usurper, for her part, is just as relieved as the one usurped. The Third Princess appears to be succeeding in the creation of an ideal, reclusive world of childhood into which she can slip unmolested, and to a certain extent both the new husband and rival wife are co-operating. Ultimately, however, our heroine will have to reckon with irresistible forces impelling her into the adult sphere.

There is much narrative misdirection about how Genji must spend his nights with the Third Princess if he does not wish to offend her. Throughout the *Kagerô nikki*, as well, we are reminded of how lack of sustained interest by the husband is perceived as humiliating. Readers of the *Genji monogatari* are, nevertheless, made well aware that this young bride is disinclined to desire his presence. Despite the fact that Murasaki is resigned to his "divid[ing] his time evenly between her and the Third Princess" (TG: 597), Genji rapidly tires of the latter and ceases his regular visits, "ma[king] do with an exchange of notes" (TG: 560). The gossips, sure that she is having "a sad time of it" (TG: 585), speculate that "the Third Princess was spending lonely nights and days of boredom" (TG: 611). Nothing in the text, however, implies that this (in name only) principal wife herself fears either humiliation or boredom caused by spousal inattention, instead she likely views his coolness as a welcome development in their relationship. She prefers to be left alone, and if "she was no great competitor for Genji's affection" (TG: 580), well, this princess has clearly never hoped to be one. On a superficial level, Genji is aware that she does not desire his attentions, but he does not pause to consider her rationale when the results are so clearly in his own interests:

> He was in no hurry to visit the Third Princess. She did not seem to care a great deal whether he came or not [...]. If she had made trouble he would probably have been more worried about her than about Murasaki; but as it was she worried him no more than a pretty, harmless toy. (TG: 563)

The strategy is working well. The princess is more than happy to be "losing out" (TG: 612) to Genji's other, lower-status wives if this means fewer intrusions into the female sanctuary she is attempting to create for herself. "On nights when His Lordship does not come the princess has swarms of women in her room, and always several of her favorites right beside her" (TG: 612). Most of these ladies-in-waiting are youthful playmates, although Kojijû at least functions as a maternal figure, reinforcing the princess' illusion of eternal childhood.

This is no gender-neutral *Peter Pan* fantasy of escape from adult responsibilities, but rather one that is inescapably and pessimistically informed by universal female experience. Many Western readers will find that *Sleeping Beauty* comes to mind, and that work of children's literature is indeed instructive in this particular case. The well-loved fairytale has been described by more than one critic as a puberty myth, where Girl is awakened into Woman and takes her preordained place within patriarchal society. What we have here is in fact a grim variation, wherein the subversive Beauty, an attractive and highly desirable (socially speaking) young female, declines to be sexually awakened by her Prince Charming: "The Third Princess was the one who refused to grow up. She was still a little child" (TG: 597). There appears to be an intuitive understanding that acknowledging either male or female sexuality is dangerous, in that it exposes the woman to phallic invasion and is doomed to lead to something other than happiness ever after. As we will see below, the dire consequences resulting from the one occasion where our heroine does allow herself to be seen as sexually ripe are evidence of how right her reclusive instincts are. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar comment that:

> Women writers [...] have described female sexual initiation in terms of the myth of Persephone, with its themes of abduction, rape, the death of the physical world, and sorrowful separation from female companions.[24]

In a wilful act of avoidance, therefore, the Third Princess is shielding herself from carnal knowledge and the appropriation of the female self that it represents by seeking chaste interiority. Rachel Brownstein makes a related point about the heroine of Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*:

> She is terrified of open spaces. Her fear of the world's wideness and her awareness of her own vulnerability are symptoms of her intelligence [...]. Willed ignorance keeps her snug and smug [...] most of the time.[25]

Like Gwendolen, our princess shrinks from exposure to the world and resolutely refuses to accept sexual maturity when it will do nothing but expose her vulnerability. Another critic rightly states that "the erotic is Genji's mode of bringing women into his sphere of influence,"[26] and therefore attempting to render oneself ineligible for an erotic role is a highly justifiable strategy for a woman desperate for some level of autonomy. The passage from virgin girlhood to wife is frequently negotiated at great cost to the female psyche, and the Third Princess resists being propelled forward into the threatening territory of adulthood.

Despite her immaturity, of course, our princess is indeed a married woman. She nonetheless stubbornly refuses to come of age emotionally, with a view to having the husband take care of her in a paternal fashion. We have already demonstrated that Genji, old enough to be her parent, is in fact forced into more or less the role of surrogate father:

> The other side of the matter was that she did have a certain girlish charm. She listened quietly and answered with whatever came into her mind. He must be good to her. In his younger days his disappointment would have approached contempt, but he had become more tolerant. (TG: 559)

His "tolerance" in the face of such childishness was exactly what she was counting on. The Third Princess carries on this preternaturally juvenile act for several years, enjoying significant success with her subterfuge:

> Though [...] in her early twenties and very pretty, she was tiny and fragile and still very much a child. He [Genji] wished that she might at least look a little more grown-up.
>
> "Your royal father has not seen you in years," he would say. "You must show him what a fine young lady you have become." (TG: 599)

To emphasize her characterization as Child, not only does she take refuge in a psychologically prepubescent state, she is described (a few pages earlier) as being physically like the very young:

> She was tiny and immature physically, and she gave a general impression of still greater, and quite extraordinary, immaturity. [...] The Third Princess was like a baby. (TG: 554)

The smaller the body, the less likely it is to attract the male gaze. The next chapter of this thesis will show how Ôigimi embarks on a strategy of self-starvation from a similar desire to eliminate her own physicality. By reducing the extent of their corporeal boundaries, these women hope to pass unnoticed through a hostile world. In the words of Doris Bargen:

> Genji has the impression that the Third Princess is **hidden inside** her clothes. As Murasaki Shikibu puts it in an unusual expression, the Third Princess tends to be all clothes (see S:558; 4:66: *ito onzogachi ni*). Although startled by this, **Genji does not feel compelled to discover her**.[27]

Certain phrases of the quotation above have been put in bold face here in order to draw attention to what Bargen suggests without elaboration. By retreating within, presenting herself as a creature of little if any substance or self (*mi mo naku*[28]), the princess hinders discovery or violation of that self. She seeks shelter inside the multi-layered sartorial armour available to Heian noblewomen, as flimsy as it may be, in an effort to hide or even erase herself. In her desire to be sexually inaccessible, it is only logical for the Third Princess to seek to deny the body in a paradoxical attempt at protecting it. Of course, as we know from other stories in the literature of the period, the single-minded Heian nobleman rarely co-operates in respecting a woman's desire to remain concealed. Indeed, feminine modesty usually serves but to pique his curiosity.

Several commentaries argue that, irrespective of all the talk of him taking over almost altruistically from his brother the responsibility of raising the young princess, Genji's interest in this girl has, from the start, always been far from avuncular. In McCullough's words, he "accepts [the new bride] with mingled reluctance, gratification at the connection, and curiosity"[29], with the last emotion likely uppermost. As niece to his stepmother, in exactly the same relationship to Fujitsubo as Murasaki herself, in fact, she intrigues this suitor who is always seeking substitutes for his doomed first love. Ever the tireless sexual adventurer, our hero is obviously titillated by this new and very well-connected find. As Shirane has it:

> Genji's decision at the beginning of "Wakana I" to accept the daughter of the retired Suzaku emperor is governed by external circumstances—the retired emperor's illness, his determination to take vows, and the uncertain future and immaturity of the Third Princess—but ultimately it is Genji's amorous ways, particularly the memory of the Fujitsubo lady, that lead him to marry the young lady.[30]

The text itself informs us that "it would seem that Genji still has all the old acquisitive instincts" (TG: 541). Tempted, he begins to lust after the as-yet-unseen Third Princess, contemplating the fact that there are "such fine looks on both sides of [her] family" (TG: 545). Despite the platitudes about Genji "look[ing] upon her, still very much a child, as someone to educate and improve" (TG: 565), he has no intention of renouncing his conjugal rights. The princess is destined to be sacrificed to the insatiable sexual appetite of the male, consumed just like the young herbs that give this chapter its title, which fact is made explicit: "the main southeast hall in which Genji had sampled the new herbs became her boudoir" (TG: 554).

Retreating into childhood as a means of coping with a hostile and often confusing world is not a strategy limited to Heian Japan. It has been noted that, in 19th-century England and the United States, "one of the careers open to women was perpetual childhood."[31] In anticipation of what Rich would later call Emily Dickinson's "renunciation, isolation and incorporeality,"[32] the Third Princess practices her own unique tactic of seclusion. Unable to remove herself physically from society, at least that admittedly small part of it to be found within the gates of Rokujô, she seeks to isolate herself emotionally by clinging to a physiological and psychological state where she may be judged ineligible for masculine notice. Passed helplessly from father to father-husband, she is constantly shrinking from the dangers inherent to the adult world ruled by men. Even on the three traditional wedding nights, this motherless girl hesitates to abandon the illusory security of her substitute mother and sisters: "Still a child, the princess kept her women close beside her" (TG: 556). She is described by her nurse as *mada toshi ito wakakute, muge ni karobitaru hodo*[33], "really so very innocent and inexperienced, astonishingly so, indeed" (TG: 542). She rejects the role of coy young bride and instead disingenuously plays the extreme innocent, hoping to deflect Genji from notions of copulation and thus protect herself from violation.

Because of the Suzaku emperor's decision to abandon the world, the Third Princess was denied the luxury of a proud and isolated virginity that might have been possible had she been permitted to remain unmarried in his house. Her father, in preparation for taking the tonsure, has married her off to the already much-married Genji, seeing this a lesser evil to leaving her vulnerable to other, marauding males:

> there are unmarried princesses who suddenly find themselves alone in the world, quite without protection. In the old days people were diffident and respectful and would not have dreamed of violating the proprieties, but in our own day the most determined and purposeful lady cannot be sure that she is not going to be insulted. (TG: 543)

Far from a strong personality, the princess is in fact "the most inadequately protected" (TG: 548) of women, and will prove to require even more protection than her concerned father has been able to provide in this way. Outwardly, she is given all the respect owing one of her exalted birth, as Genji "[kept] up appearances" (TG: 580) and "paid her due honor" (TG: 592). All the proprieties are observed, and "her superior social status is acknowledged by the spacious quarters assigned to her and her attendants."[34] Nonetheless, the Third Princess is exposed to violation as the husband ostensibly chosen to protect her asserts his universally recognized right of access across her spatial and corporeal boundaries. In spite of the fact that she clings to prepubescent space, she is unable to preserve or recreate the chastity that she views as a woman's only security.

Like so many other heroines, she learns soon enough that beauty is her downfall. "The white profile framed by masses of black hair was pretty and elegant" (TG: 583) and "in her face and figure was an abundance of quiet, unpretending young charm" (TG: 584). She attempts to conceal her attractiveness behind an utterly non-erotic facade. Regardless, the very artlessness and lack of coyness she displays often ironically serve only to lead men on, and we will see in the next chapter of this thesis how Ôigimi is frustrated by similar experiences. The Third Princess' good looks and political usefulness as the treasured child of a retired emperor will prove fatal to her own desire to find privacy and security of person. Kashiwagi, for example:

> had known when she was still a child that she was very pretty and that she was her father's favorite. It was from these early beginnings that his love had grown. (TG: 611)

No matter what tactics of avoidance she employs, libidinous males will come sniffing around her door.

The princess has tried desperately to maintain control over her inner self, to keep her sexuality under wraps, and thereby restrict the damage it may cause to herself, by posing as a child. The attempt proves futile, as she is eventually exposed in a moment of carefree abandon that has incontestably sexual overtones. The scene in which Kashiwagi glimpses her chasing her escaped pussycat functions as a magnificent metaphor of the bursting forth of a woman's hitherto denied sexuality. As Bargen so aptly phrases it:

> By disobeying the imperative of female reclusiveness, the princess subverts the male topos of *kaimami*.
>
> The freak accident exposes for the first time her unbridled sexual anima, made visible in an erect body and associated with the animality of the cat. [...] Both temperamental creatures break through the blinds that symbolize civilized behavior and rules of etiquette. [...] Under Heian behavioral norms, the Third Princess, once she has been glimpsed through an accident that achieves the effect of *kaimami* without conforming to its structure, has become fair game for Yûgiri and Kashiwagi.[35]

The Third Princess finds herself ineluctably betrayed by the sexuality that has always been lurking beneath the surface and can no longer be dissimulated. To return to Rich's analysis of Dickinson: "The woman who feels herself to be Vesuvius at home has need of a mask, at least, of innocuousness and of containment."[36] The Princess has succeeded until now in containing her libido, hiding behind a mask of innocuous girlhood. However, something in the air that fateful afternoon will cause her customary barriers to fall. Among the band of young men gathered in the grounds of Genji's mansion, as well: "a certain abandon was to be observed" (TG:

581-2) For his part, Kashiwagi reveals where his thoughts lie from the very beginning, stealing furtive glances at the Third Princess' rooms.

She is playing with her kitten when it escapes beyond the curtains, simultaneously allowing Kashiwagi to catch a glimpse of her as she runs about in an unguarded moment. This is highly irregular among the Heian nobility, where high-status women never allow themselves to be seen "erect", and even once the male is allowed to penetrate the habitual screens and other barriers, formal poses are *de rigueur*.[37] In this moment, her true, undeniable self is fatally revealed. Dickinson once wrote (poem #512):

> The soul has moments of Escape—
> When bursting all the doors—
> She dances like a Bomb, abroad,
> And swings upon the hours...[38]

This unusual *kaimami* incident indeed presents an image of escape from rigid confines, however self-imposed, but one that ultimately proves ruinous, as it explodes her idyllic fantasy of security. Patriarchal powers have typically conceived of the female libido as a destructive force. Ironically enough, this is especially true from the Third Princess' perspective as well, in that she sees sexuality as a trap luring her into being exploited. It is important to bear in mind that Kashiwagi's viewing implicitly means possession, and has even been termed visual rape, within the mores of their day.

Her women, fearful for their mistress' reputation and their own as her guardians, quickly step forward in the princess' defence. Kojijû pleads with Kashiwagi:

> Do not let it be known, I pray of you,

> That your eye has fallen on the mountain cherry.
>
> "It will never do, never." (TG: 586)

Unfortunately for the Third Princess, no self-respecting Heian male would allow himself to be so easily dismissed: "Kojijû's answer was not unreasonable, and yet it seemed rather brusque. Was there to be nothing more? Might he not hope for some word from the princess herself?" (TG: 587). The smitten young nobleman is not about to let this prize slip through his fingers. In Heian literature, scheming men are forever trying to position themselves to take advantage of women once they are left unprotected. "Nothing in this world is permanent, and Genji might one day make up his mind to leave it. Kashiwagi kept after Kojijû" (TG: 581). Events do ultimately reward the young man's persistence.

Kashiwagi develops a rather disturbing interest in the cat as a sexual fetish: "Mewing prettily, it brought the image of the Third Princess back to him (for he had been ready to fall in love)" (TG: 584). Interestingly enough for our purposes, the comments ostensibly directed at and about the kitten are not inappropriate to the lovely yet unresponsive princess herself. It is a "perfectly charming little thing" and "a handsome beast [...] but it does not seem terribly friendly" (TG: 589). Optimistically, Kashiwagi is confident that the object of his obsession will eventually come around, just as the cat does: "Once the initial shyness had passed it proved to be a most affectionate animal" (TG: 589). Just as Genji seeks substitutes for Fujitsubo throughout the tale, Kashiwagi covets the pet as a replacement for the as-yet-unattainable Third Princess:

> He thought of the princess's cat and suddenly longed to have it for himself. He could not share his unhappiness with it, perhaps, but he

> might be less lonely. The thought became an obsession. Perhaps he could steal it—but that would not be easy. (TG: 588)

Kashiwagi does indeed eventually attain satisfaction by stealing the cat (and later its mistress).[39] He actually treats it with more consideration than he does its owner. While he thoughtfully inquires as to the silent feline's wishes—"You are here to remind me of someone I long for, and what is it you long for yourself?" (TG: 589)—, Kashiwagi is untroubled by the possibility that its human alter ego may not share his passion. He is determined to proceed on the self-centred assumption that the similarly voiceless Third Princess' desires must be identical to his own.

After viewing the princess virtually *en déshabille*, Kashiwagi writes to her of his infatuation. Her immediate response to his letter is to fear castigation by the husband, rather than the real and more serious threat posed by the aroused roving male: "She was terrified. Had Yûgiri seen and told Genji? Would Genji scold her? She was indeed a child, that fear of Genji should come first" (TG: 586). Our narrator here informs us that, to a woman in the Heian period, fear of men in general, and young licentious ones such as Kashiwagi in particular, should rightly take precedence. On this occasion, the Third Princess proves to be as naive as the text implies, and does not at all anticipate the subsequent illicit encroachment into her space, both domestic and corporeal:

> The princess had gone off serenely to bed. She sensed that a man was in her room and thought that it would be Genji. But he seemed rather too polite—and then suddenly he put his arms around her and took her from her bed. She was terrified. Had some evil power seized her? (TG: 613)

The "evil power" is none other than Kashiwagi, in his role as representative of a patriarchy eternally hostile to her desire for privacy and security of self. As we see elsewhere, the ladies-in-waiting behave complicitly: "she called for her women, but no one came" (TG: 613). And even when the male experiences a twinge of sympathy for her plight, he ignores it: "Though he could not help feeling sorry for her, he thought this agitation rather charming" (TG: 613). Kashiwagi is relentlessly determined to act out his monomania, even though the Third Princess absolutely refuses to do anything to encourage him:

> She was pretty and gentle and unresisting, and far more graceful and elegant, in a winsome way, than most ladies he had known. His passion was suddenly more than he could control. Was there no hiding place to which they might run off together? (TG: 614)

Disingenuously ignoring the fact that he has himself just destroyed the virtual hideaway she has been at pains to create for herself, however imperfect and permeable it may have been, Kashiwagi again assumes that she must share his feelings. As usual, we see the Third Princess resort to the strategy, already demonstrated to be a pathetically feeble one, of playing the helpless young girl: "She wept like a little child and he looked on with respectful pity" (TG: 614-5).

Even though he may feel pity, the self-involved male does not let that emotion stand in the way of taking what he wants. The following morning, Kashiwagi bodily removes her from even the repeatedly violated sanctuary of her rooms and exposes her to direct and humiliating visual scrutiny:

> He took her in his arms and carried her out. She was terrified. What could he possibly mean to do with her? He spread a screen in a corner room and opened the door beyond. The south door of the gallery, through which he had come the evening before, was still open. It was very dark. Wanting to see her face, even dimly, he pushed open the shutter. (TG: 615)

The spatial metaphor in this passage is striking. As he bears his trophy past screens, doors and shutters, the permeability of all of these usual defences and the futility of the princess' desire for control of her own person are made manifest. Throughout this masculine invasion of female space, the princess remains utterly, intransigently silent. In this connection, Mostow makes a highly intriguing observation with regard to the earlier romance entitled *Ochikubo monogatari*, to the effect that a suitor's sexual "actions remain rape unless and until the lady speaks."[40] When the aggressor unavailingly begs her for a word, egoistically certain that whatever she has to say will be in sympathy with his own destructive passion, the narrator bluntly tells us: "She did want to say something. She wanted to say that his conduct was outrageous. But she was trembling like a frightened child" (TG: 615). The princess continues to play dumb and, with daylight approaching, Kashiwagi is no longer able to remain in her quarters for fear of discovery:

> He finally seemed to be leaving. So great was her relief that she managed an answer:
>
> "Would I might fade away in the sky of dawn,
> And all of it might vanish as a dream."
>
> She spoke in a tiny, wavering voice and she was like a beautiful child. (TG: 615)

The customs of the time allow the young man to believe that the Third Princess' behaviour has been merely a conceit of modesty and resistance. Like other deliberately obtuse men to whom we refer in this thesis, he acts "as if he had only half heard" (TG: 615) the dissent she actually expresses.

While sporadically successful, the Third Princess' strategy of erecting a barrier of childhood has in the end proved inadequate to repel either marriage to

Genji or the salacious attack of her unlawful suitor, and is now revealed as ineffectual in defending her against unjust judgements. Soundly scolded by Kojijû for carelessly allowing her husband to discover Kashiwagi's letter, the "princess was too good-natured and still too much of a child to argue back" (TG: 624). The narrator comments sympathetically on the Third Princess' lack of resources to deal with either this new and utterly unexpected trespass or society's guilty verdict, commenting that she "felt as vulnerable as if one of her women had already broadcast her secret to the world. She could not face the sun. She wanted to brood in darkness" (TG: 616). In other words, she has had the ever so painstakingly constructed protective barriers stripped away, and is now once more thrust into the glaring light of reality. We have already been told that the "lady was such a pretty little child of a thing, reduced to almost nothing at all by the brilliance of her surroundings" (TG: 558). The princess' fondest wish is to recover her life in the shadows, screened off from the brazenly intrusive patriarchal world, that she had earlier enjoyed within her infantile haven, fictive as it may have been. She pretends to be blind and deaf to the entreaties of her concerned husband, the Shining Genji: "There was nothing emphatically wrong with her, it would seem, but she refused to look at him [Genji]" (TG: 616). Once again our hero proves to be less than truly insightful. He fears "that she was out of sorts because of his long absence" (TG: 616), and still later: "Interpreting her silence as resentment at his long absence, he set about reasoning with her" (TG: 621-2). Rather than letting her alone, the thoughtful but eternally uncomprehending Genji seems to redouble his efforts: "So cheerful and even frolicsome at other times, she was subdued and refused to look at him. It must be that she thought he did not love her" (TG: 623). Showering her with attention that she has never sought, indeed has always shunned, the husband responds patronizingly to her inability to cheer up: "She seemed so very young. He thought her charming" (TG: 623). The reader knows, however, that she has in point of fact been forced to grow up very quickly and face the grim reality of a hostile world, which for her part she finds less than charming.

Kashiwagi's own dogged attentions have deleterious effects on her health:

> The Third Princess had been unwell since that shocking visitation. [...] Unable to contain himself, Kashiwagi would sometimes come for visits as fleeting as dreams. She did not welcome them. (TG: 621)

Of course, the cause of her indisposition turns out to be pregnancy. Cuckolded Genji is profoundly irritated that, despite all his kindness, "she had responded by choosing a man like Kashiwagi!" (TG: 625). And yet we have demonstrated repeatedly that, left to her own desires, far from "choosing" this suitor, she would have opted for a life of celibacy if that choice had in fact been available to her. Just as she has pretended to be other than the adult, sexual woman she is, she now desperately attempts to deny the reality of this violation, refusing to read Kashiwagi's letters of entreaty. Her women feel for her predicament but have little choice but to side with the patriarchy. Kojijû repeatedly allows him into the princess' space both physically and metaphorically, thrusting Kashiwagi's correspondence at her mistress cowering among the bedclothes and "pull[ing] the princess's curtains closed" (TG: 623), thereby effectively trapping our heroine with incontrovertible evidence of her vulnerability and the utter hopelessness of the situation.

The men involved in the Third Princess' life are constantly "waiting for her to grow up and become just a little more aware of things" (TG: 543). Surely the fact that she defiantly refuses to grow up like other women is evidence of how aware she actually is. The events in this character's story show that a desire to remain a child and thus avoid or at least delay entry into the complicated and threatening mire of sexual relationships is far from unreasonable. When Genji and the Suzaku emperor were originally discussing what was to become of her, they had concluded: "Yes, the safest thing by far would be to find someone whom the Third Princess can depend upon in everything" (TG: 548). With marriage to the loyal and powerful Hikaru Genji, "the future of the Third Princess seemed secure" (TG: 549).[41] In the ruthlessly male-dominated Heian society, however, no man proves really dependable, and women remain pregnable in a variety of ways.

Unable to formulate viable alternatives to the merciless reality in which she finds herself imprisoned, vulnerable to multiple male incursions and her husband's scorn, the Third Princess has no option but to get herself to a nunnery. Again, the apparently passive act of withdrawing from the world conceals an active rejection of that world. As Field writes:

> It is clear that for these women, becoming a nun is an act of self-expression that can only take the form of denial. Sexual relations have governed their lives, and they resolutely turn their backs, usually in the face of variously interested opposition. No doubt there is an unarticulated desire to expend the energy of guilt in religious practice (a desire overlapping with concern for salvation), but the sheer need to announce a departure from the world of men is at least as strong.[42]

The religious life will provide her with the maximum degree of solitude and peace allowed women by Heian society, as she finally achieves the utopian celibacy promised by an asexual status that has hitherto eluded her.

The Third Princess has stubbornly refused to abandon childhood, which for her represents an insulated, paradisiacal territory that offers even a slim chance for achieving security of self. Unfortunately for our heroine, neither Genji nor Kashiwagi are willing to let her remain in the blissful state of ignorance she has chosen. Ruthlessly, they attempt to rouse her to the consciousness of awakened adulthood, one by marrying her, the other through an unwanted seduction/rape and impregnation. Unlike the hero in Wilfred Owen's poem, they do not tiptoe gently away, being unable or unwilling to recognize that waking her constitutes an unwelcome act of aggression. Her suitors, as different from each other as they are in many ways, are identical in their egocentric inability to consider that a woman's goals and notions of security might well be other than theirs. Kashiwagi assumes that she must respond to his desire, for example, and that it is solely extenuating circumstances that keep her from rushing into his arms:

> A lesser lady might have found an excuse for leaving the house, a taboo or something of the sort. But she was a princess and he must contrive to send word of his longing through thick walls and curtains. (TG: 585)

He never stops to consider that, far from looking for excuses to slip out for a lover's tryst, she has sought isolation and self-preservation behind these very walls and curtains. Eternal egoists, both men see her as nothing more or less than a prize to be won, and neglect to realize that a woman may well prefer remaining in the dark to waking into a hostile patriarchal world.

In her pursuit of security, control, and enclosure through adoption of the regressive identity of a child, the Third Princess is doomed to failure. Her strategy, a deliberate pretence at remaining within the realm of sexual inaccessibility, is faulty in that only the most extreme youth could realistically (and even then merely until the onset of puberty) be viewed as a refuge from male violation. As well, denied a physical space that can honestly be called her own, being displaced from her childhood home to a wing of her husband's mansion, the princess is eternally subject to his whims. Even once she has discouraged Genji's interest by flaunting her immaturity, the fantasy of finding true asylum within prepubescent space is exposed by Kashiwagi's violation. Her "inner child", to borrow a phrase from late 20th-century pop psychology, is constantly under siege. In the end, she does manage to escape the clutches of men, but only by taking the tonsure at a shockingly young age. While the reader is denied much direct access to the princess' thoughts, Murasaki Shikibu's skilful use of the metaphor of her character's withdrawal into a mental space as a form of resistance to violation renders the invisible visible and allows the mute to speak. What is spoken, however, is a highly pessimistic view of her world. The Third Princess, suffering from what Gilbert and Gubar have described as "the essential homelessness—the nameless, placeless and contingent status—of women in a patriarchal society"[43], is refused any true self-determination by a social system that denies either space or voice to the vast majority of women. In response, she rejects the falsified self-determination that the patriarchally defined status of Woman would give her, and instead seeks refuge in the only space she can identify as her own: a place of childhood that is ultimately revealed to be false and eternally vulnerable.

Virgin Territory:
How Ôigimi Resists the Male

We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry, thirsty roots.
- Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market*

The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical thing in the world.
- Edgar Allan Poe

Setouchi Jakuchô has characterized *Genji monogatari* as a sort of sex education manual designed at least in part to instruct Empress Akiko, who was a mere child ignorant of romantic love and adult sexuality when she entered the Court, about the complexities of male/female relations.[1] In this context, the Ôigimi story offers much food for thought concerning Murasaki Shikibu's attitude toward the likelihood of most women finding happiness in such relationships. A close examination reveals a highly subversive meta-text revolving around what is a psychological struggle against the menacing Phallus, resulting in the anorexia-induced suicide of a woman who feels an overpowering need to escape being wedded and bedded. Many episodes found in Heian literature show how, despite varying degrees of initial reluctance, women are married off. The *Kagerô nikki*'s Michitsuna no Haha accepts Kaneie's suit and, in the *Genji*, young Murasaki, the Akashi Lady, Tamakazura, and countless others do in the end become brides, to name but a few examples. Thus, while Heian heroines are frequently portrayed as offering a posture of resistance to the sexual demands made by men, most do at one time or another yield more or less willingly to such demands. In the darker Uji chapters, however, a unique female character appears, one who clings to her decision to resist marriage and all that it entails, even unto death. When viewed microscopically, the actions of this *ie no onna* may well appear paranoid and irrational (or, in Freudian terms, frigid), but macroscopically, taking into account the women's stories that have come before, they are all too justifiable. This last chapter will examine this woman's resistance in the light of Luce Irigaray's comment that "the body is not matter, but metaphor"[2], discussing both the rationale behind Ôigimi's overwhelmingly negative reaction to male invasion and the tactics she uses to resist her suitor.

The reader is given a multitude of reasons for the elder Uji princess' rejection of Kaoru. Her most often stated rationale is the desire to honour her father's wishes and protect the family name from ridicule (*hitowarae*). As Shirane explains at some length in *The Bridge of Dreams*, while her high rank requires Ôigimi to marry within an elite group or suffer social opprobrium, the family's status has diminished to the point where she has little hope of marrying well, if at all.[3] The aristocratic Kaoru's offer should, therefore, logically be received as a welcome one. As for the purported parental disapproval, Hachi no Miya (also known as the Eighth Prince) clearly had never intended his stricture against marrying to apply in this case, on the contrary entertaining the fond hope that one of the daughters would indeed wed his trustworthy and admirable pupil. The Eighth Prince makes several rather vague comments about the nature of the relationship either Ôigimi or Nakanokimi might eventually enter into with Kaoru, such as "his thoughts have turned to you because I once chanced to hint at a hope that he would watch over you after my death" (TG: 792). Other statements made in both the first and third person become much more explicit: "I have done what I could to bring you together. You have years ahead of you and I must leave the rest to you" (TG: 805), and especially: "Kaoru was exactly what he hoped a son-in-law might be" (TG: 801). Should a proposal be made, therefore, it would scarcely fall into the category of "unsuitable marriages" (TG: 807) against which he warns the sisters, and one is hard pressed to misinterpret the father's actual wishes in this matter.

So why does Ôigimi adamantly refuse the suitor? A far more convincing factor behind her decision not to accept this husband is a fear of what intimacy with men will entail. While allowing males to have access to her person would provide the *ushiromi* that this orphaned female needs to make her way in society, accepting such support would place her completely at the mercy of a ruthless patriarchy. Consequently, the resistance she manifests can be viewed as a conscious attempt to retain her autonomy and sense of self. Ironically, in this case, self-preservation is possible only through self-annihilation, and the reader bears witness to Ôigimi's inexorable progress toward death.

While the isolated domestic space of Uji initially offers a stable place of refuge for the princesses, loss of the father-protector exposes them to Kaoru's and Niou's claims to right of access. Despite her initial protestations that she prefers to spend the rest of her life alone with her sister, Nakanokimi soon succumbs to what is considered a normal woman's fate and marries Niou. The elder sibling, however, is unable to conceive of wedlock as a desirable or even imaginable option, and rejects

Kaoru's overtures again and again. Unwilling or unable to accept this quite unparalleled resistance as genuine, the hero nonetheless continues to badger her. Given that external flight is not a viable option, Ôigimi's fear of the Phallus (and the threat to her independence that it represents) necessitates ever further retreat within the inner sphere. Eventually, her desperate efforts to maintain spatial integrity lead her to reject any trespass of bodily boundaries, including via the act of eating. By starving herself to death, she gradually succeeds in eliminating her own physicality, which has served to attract the unwanted and insistent suitor. To Ôigimi's mind, intimacy with the male can be achieved only by sacrificing autonomy and identity, and is thus a destiny to be avoided at all costs.

Although born in Heian-kyô, Ôigimi and Nakanokimi have spent many years of their lives in the Uji villa, isolated from the capital and the glories of civilization it has to offer. Poetic allusions in the *Genji monogatari* and elsewhere play repeatedly on the association of the place name Uji with *ushi*, an adjective meaning gloomy, wearisome, distasteful, or miserable. Indeed, the Eighth Prince moved his family to this location only as a last resort, when their principal residence in the city burned down. He is aware of the hardship such a rusticated life may pose for his young daughters, but has no viable alternative. This environment is described in quite forbidding terms:

> Mountain upon mountain separated his [the Eighth Prince's] dwelling from the larger world. Rough people of the lower classes, woodcutters and the like, sometimes came by to do chores for him. There were no other callers. The gloom continued day after day, as stubborn and clinging as 'the morning mist on the peaks'. (TG: 779-80)

Not only is the villa remote from the city and human companionship, it is constantly enshrouded in oppressive mist and surrounded by dense undergrowth:

> As he [Kaoru] came into the mountains the mist was so heavy and the underbrush so thick that he could hardly make out the path; and as he pushed his way through thickets the rough wind would throw showers of dew upon him from a turmoil of falling leaves. (TG: 783)

The Western reader cannot help but be once again reminded of *Sleeping Beauty*, where the hero must fight his way through an almost impenetrable forest to rescue a virginal and insensible heroine. Nevertheless, as we will see below, in this case the acutely sensible beauty considers the wilderness an asylum and, to the consternation of her would-be champion, declines to be delivered from her unwed status in the traditional manner.

As Rachel Brownstein points out, this cult of the chaste maiden is an important and recurring motif in Western literature: "A beautiful virgin walled off from an imperfect world is the central figure in romance."[4] During Japan's Heian period as well, high-born women were very much "walled off", in that they remained jealously guarded behind several layers of walls, screens, and curtains. Access by even closely related adult males was not socially acceptable, with the result that the interior is portrayed as an almost exclusively female-gendered space.

Ironically, most Heian architecture is revealed to be insubstantial, in that physical, visual, and aural penetration is within the reach of any moderately resourceful voyeur. Indeed, the entire tragedy of Ôigimi begins to unfold with Kaoru catching a hint of music wafting from the sisters' quarters. In this initially accidental, although not unqualifiedly innocent[5], aural violation of their privacy, the young man becomes tantalized by the faint strains of the lovely, melancholy duet that Ôigimi and Nakanokimi are playing on *koto* and *biwa*. Once he learns that Hachi no Miya, whom he has intended to visit, is away on a spiritual retreat (and that the two young women are thus alone and unprotected), the titillating possibility of a chance at *kaimami* proves irresistible. With the connivance of a guardsman employed by the princesses, he hides behind a fence and, by the light of the moon shining out from behind a cloud, is able to peer at the two unsuspecting women under their raised blinds. The reader participates in this surreptitious violation of their privacy and Kaoru's resulting arousal, which fact is made clear in countless illustrations of this and similar scenes. Mostow makes the following comment:

> The female narrator and her illustrator have internalized the masculine gaze and have been colonized by it: the narrator and viewer both merge with Kaoru and become complicit in his voyeurism. Essential to the voyeur's pleasure is the obliviousness of his object: the one he views must be totally absorbed in her own actions and unaware of the presence of a viewer.[6]

Ôigimi and her sister have indeed no reason to suspect the presence of a peeping tom, although they do subsequently blame themselves for being oblivious to Kaoru's distinctive aroma, which had been carried to them on the breeze.[7] After all, they are described here as *uchi naru hito*[8]—literally, "the people inside"—thus hardly sitting out in the open, or even on the veranda as is the case with two of their ladies-in-waiting. It is only reasonable for the princesses to assume that they were sheltered from prying eyes there in their private quarters, behind gates and fences, surrounded by serving women and protected by guardsmen outside, as had been the case until this fateful day.

In these chapters, nature and geography appear to offer additional barriers to violation and protect Ôigimi and Nakanokimi from unwanted intrusions. The Uji palace is presented as both a religious and secular sanctuary, the tortuous route from the capital serving to discourage most gallants and thus keeping its occupants safe from harm. Seidensticker rightly mentions the significance of the "gothic mists and waters of Uji"[9], and one is tempted to see the Uji River as a moat-like additional defence against invaders. Of course, being on the far side of the Eighth Prince's property, it does not pose a physical barrier to access. Nevertheless, the river is repeatedly described in terms that make of it an omnipresent symbol of nature's power, serving as a warning to those from outside but somehow a source of comfort to the female inmates. We have already pointed out that prospective suitors must struggle through almost impassable thickets and underbrush, their passage made more difficult by the ever-present fog. Until Kaoru thoughtlessly discloses their existence to the licentious Niou, the sisters enjoy an almost uterine security in what is in effect a secure, woman-centred world. Let us not forget that this is a society where homes are principally inherited on a matrilineal basis, and that these female characters are also thus intimately associated with their residence.

Given that Ôigimi lost her mother at a tender age, this locale can even, to a certain extent, be taken as a mother figure—an abstraction of the feminine principle. It is worth noting in this connection that, as a would-be priest who, despite pressure from members of his household, declines to remarry following his wife's death, Hachi no Miya is presented as a de-sexed or not-male character. The effeminate nature of the Uji princesses' father, like that of the Third Princess', is clearly spelled out: he has "a soft gentility that approached the womanish" (TG: 779). Along these lines, Ôigimi's anorexia can be interpreted as a rejection of her own sexuality or femaleness in imitation of her sole parental role model: a final desire to regress to childhood, to undifferentiation, even if this regression means death. Such a reading would then significantly parallel the failed attempt by the Third Princess (another motherless child) to cling to the prepubescent space that she views as her one refuge from the menacing Phallus, as was argued in the previous chapter. Accordingly, Kaoru's violation would take on even more ominous overtones as an attack on not only Ôigimi herself, but also "child" or "woman" in general.

Bearing all these connotations associated with Uji in mind helps make more readily comprehensible Ôigimi's inward-looking obsession and consistent reluctance to leave. The security of her home is not something an intelligent woman throws away lightly, and the sisters have no hope of effective support elsewhere. As Brownstein points out, romantic heroines, symbolized by a rooted flower fated passively to await the male, must stand guard over their spatial and corporeal boundaries:

> Everything that can happen to the Rose while the lover struggles to reach her happens inside. She cannot but be self-preoccupied (which is not to say self-aware); unlike the Lover, she has no Rose outside of herself to draw her out or up. Her life must be passed in staring at the bare insides of garden walls. Eternal vigilance is her lot; if she lets herself be distracted it may be dangerous.[10]

The interior is clearly identified as her predestined space, and allowing any male to have access is a step fraught with danger. This lesson seems to have been instinctively learned by women in the Heian period: "So the last veil had been stripped away, thought Ôigimi. One thing was clear: theirs was a world in which not a single unguarded moment was possible" (TG: 835). The fatal conclusion of her story proves just how dangerous distraction can be.

Space is yet again unambiguously presented as a locus of power relationships. While Ôigimi has long been marginal to society at large and the class into which she was born, she conversely enjoys a pivotal position in the domestic haven at Uji. Her role as mistress of the house, companion to her father, and mother-substitute to Nakanokimi has been relatively autonomous. She thus resists Kaoru's intention to displace her from her house to his, where she would clearly become more subject to another's whims. This situation is strikingly analogous to that of the Akashi Lady, who has benefited from a childhood and youth where the world revolved around herself, and who sees no personal advantage—indeed considerable disadvantage—in being transported to Genji's household. As Charlotte Perkins Gilman once wrote:

> The life of the female savage is freedom itself … compared with the increasing constriction of custom closing in upon the woman, as civilization advances, like the iron torture chamber of romance.[11]

To these intellectually astute women who have come of age in the hinterlands of Uji or Akashi, which offer (relatively speaking) a certain amount of personal freedom, Heian-kyô and the patriarchal society enshrined there do symbolize such an iron chamber waiting to close in on them. In their view, far from the pinnacle of joy and security that it represents to the waiting women and others in their entourage, the capital is a site of dependence and potential humiliation. Ôigimi's preference for the independence she has known, in spite of its obscure and peripheral nature, is thus understandable and leads her to resist being brought to a central position (i.e. to an estate within the city limits) that will inevitably be a weaker one. What makes the situation of this Uji princess even more untenable than most is the fact that, in his concern for the well-being of his daughters, the Eighth Prince has to a certain degree dispossessed her by making both sisters *de facto* wards of another man—this other man being of course Kaoru, the stubbornly persistent suitor. Although she does inherit the property that has been her home for many years and thus gains increased nominal autonomy, Ôigimi finds herself even more reliant on Kaoru's good will than ever before as, in his role as protector sanctioned by her late father, he presses her with unwelcome attentions that she now finds extremely awkward and risky to rebuff.

Ôigimi's dilemma is a metaphor for woman's ambiguous position within and without the dominant male culture of Heian Japan and elsewhere, where the appropriation of space signifies appropriation of the body. A paralyzing fear of, or at least pronounced distaste for, intimacy with men offers little mystery in a society where women can achieve sexual union only at the cost of totally sacrificing independence and self. Even when the suitor or husband is beloved, his attentions are problematic. It has been said that, "conceiving of herself as the creature of her relationships with others, and bound by her woman's fate to a life of relationships, the conscious heroine longs for solitude and separateness."[12] In Kaoru, our author has created the ideal marriage partner, a man who is almost unfailingly patient and sensitive. Regardless, the society in which they live generally precludes wedded bliss. As one Japanese critic has put it, *donno yô ni zen'i no otoko, ii otoko to musubaretemo onna wa fukô da.*[13] ("Entering into relations with a man, no matter how kind or good he may be, means unhappiness for the woman.") Ôigimi is perceptive enough to see that she and Kaoru cannot meet as equals, without one exploiting/dominating the other. According to this admittedly dismal view of love and marriage, a life of isolation and celibacy is perceived as the sole refuge from mistreatment under the patriarchy. Nonetheless, just as chastity is denied the Third Princess and others, the option of withdrawal from social intercourse is denied Ôigimi and her sister due to the relentless attacks of libidinous men.

This heroine is unusually fortunate, in that her admirer finds himself unwilling actually to force himself upon her. He proceeds astonishingly slowly, allowing three years to pass before his visits with the father result in the first meeting with the daughters. Even when the inevitable *kaimami* opportunity finally presents itself, the young man does no more than peer in on them briefly as they play and chat, and then exact a few minutes' conversation separated by the usual curtains and blinds. Ôigimi's evident elegance and modesty discourage him from pressing his luck further and so he remains stalled at an intermediary stage rather than attaining the lover's goal. Kaoru's impotence buys our heroine time as he vacillates between action and inaction, aggression and indecision. Such restraint is wholly unlike what we see in the behaviour of Genji, Kashiwagi, and Niou, to name but a few examples in Murasaki Shikibu's masterpiece. And, as we see in the *Kagerô nikki*, Kaneie is not easily discouraged, and the inamorato Tônori's bold advances are eventually repulsed only thanks to Michitsuna no Haha's coolness and presence of mind. Kaoru himself recognizes that his patient and readily thwarted demeanour is far from typical:

> Suppose someone with more active inclinations were to come upon this lonely, unprotected house—there would be nothing to keep him from having his way. Had the visitor been anyone but himself, matters would by now have come to a showdown. (TG: 827)

The reader does indeed hesitate to think of Ôigimi's fate if it had been she, rather than Nakanokimi, who had been betrayed to the hot-blooded Niou, for instance. If this elder sister encounters difficulty fighting off the almost unswervingly self-possessed and respectful Kaoru, surely her feeble resources would be inadequate to deal with the lustful impatience displayed by his friend, the more customary sexual adventurer.

What would capitulation mean for a woman of her standing? Ôigimi is certainly old enough (around 27 years of age) to know the pathetic fate awaiting a woman who marries only to be summarily abandoned. Shirane in fact suggests that Murasaki Shikibu has given this heroine a communal memory with her other characters Murasaki and Princess Ochiba.[14] The sufferings of her predecessors at the hands of their insensitive, egocentric men paint a clear picture of what this woman can expect. And Nakanokimi's own experiences as a neglected wife reinforce the dangers inherent in succumbing to sexual temptation and male insistence:

> her sister's predicament had left her thinking that relations between husband and wife must be the bleakest the world has to offer. How could she even consider giving herself to a man? The first overtures, capable of arousing such tenderness, must lead to unhappiness later. No, it would be better for them to go on as they were, neither of them demeaning the other and neither going flagrantly against the other's wishes. Her resolve was firmer than ever. (TG: 849)

Seidensticker astutely points out elsewhere that while the *Heike* describes women happy to suffer and be trodden upon, "Murasaki Shikibu takes the more realistic view that a helpless woman is in a pretty sad position and cannot be expected to enjoy it."[15] Ôigimi knows full well that surrendering autonomy will mean laying herself open to potential abuse and humiliation, and thus takes every step possible to avoid that fate.

Ôigimi is not alone in the *Genji monogatari* in firmly rejecting the advances of a man. Both Asagao and Tamakazura successfully resist Genji, although the latter manages to avoid the Shining One only by giving herself to another. Seidensticker claims that Asagao and Ôigimi remain virgins owing to a fear of men, which is symptomatic of their lack of knowledge of the other sex:

> How like the oldest Uji princess is Asagao, both of them brought up in seclusion by a father without the educational presence of brothers. Was the type, terrified by men, so common at court? [...] Did Murasaki have a model, or did her instinct for the workings of the human spirit tell her that such circumstances would produce a sort of suicidal frigidity, a wish to see oneself extinguished before doing anything about the perpetuation of the line? I suspect the absence of brothers would be crucial. Their presence would tell a lady something of the world beyond her curtains, even though she did not see a great deal of them.[16]

Yet, as demonstrated above, Ôigimi's problem does not appear to stem from ignorance of men, but rather from the fact that she knows altogether too much of them (albeit primarily by hearsay) and how she can expect to be treated once she gives in. Komashaku Kimi characterizes her as *riaruna me o motsu onna*[17] ("a woman who has her eyes wide open"). This woman has seemingly never known innocence, being imbued from birth with the weight of female memory, eternally awake to the dangers and evils of her world as experienced by the women who came before. As she painfully witnesses what Nakanokimi is enduring, the elder sister reacts defensively: "On one score her resolve was now firm: she would not allow any man to bring this sort of uncertainty into *her* life" (TG: 848). Because this heroine's vision is clouded by neither innocence nor unrealistic ideals, she finds the willpower to stand her ground against incursions. A more romantic and less well-informed young woman would be more susceptible to masculine temptation, as we see throughout the literature.

Ôigimi must exert resistance on a number of fronts. First, the initial successes enjoyed by the forces of masculinity, represented by the characters of Kaoru and Niou, reveal that her physical personal space provides no real protection: "This tiny house [...] offered no better a hiding place than was granted the proverbial mountain pear" (TG: 832) and again: "It was, indeed, a house that offered no refuge" (TG: 833). Even while the father lives and can act as a buffer against the world, marauding males react patronizingly to the wish that the princesses remain secreted away, commenting with a smile: *ajikinaki onmono kakushinari*[18]—literally, "a silly kind of hiding of things." (Seidensticker's translation reads: "Now there is an odd sort of secret for you." ((TG: 784)).) The ease by which men insinuate themselves into her presence and her life, in certain cases aided by the very guardsmen hired to protect her from such intrusions, impresses upon the princess how exposed she is to real and figurative violation. With the eventual loss of their father, both sisters recognize their increasingly helpless position:

> They looked back over the way they had come. It had, to be sure, had its uncertainties, but they had traveled it with serenity and without fear or shame or any thought that such a disaster might one day come. And now the wind was roaring, strangers were pounding to be admitted. The panic, the terror, the loneliness, worse each day, were almost beyond endurance. (TG: 814)

The above description demonstrates beyond a doubt that even where a woman owns her own house, she remains at the mercy of any passing male who, on a whim, can choose to possess them both.

To make matters worse, it is not only men against whom she must remain vigilant. Ôigimi's waiting women look upon Kaoru as "their one hope in this impossible darkness" (TG: 831) and repeatedly urge her to accept him. They pester their mistress to give in, and expose her to almost certain violation by ignoring her wishes:

> from behind her blinds she called to her women to come nearer. No doubt thinking that chaperones would be out of place, they pretended not to hear, and indeed withdrew yet further as they lay down to rest. [...] Again she called out softly, and no one answered. (TG: 826)

Not content with a passive complicity, these ladies-in-waiting next begin to plot actively with the intruder. In particular, Kaoru enlists the help of Bennokimi in his attack:

> They had plotted ways of admitting him to her boudoir. Though not aware of the details, Ôigimi had certain suspicions: given Kaoru's remarkable fondness for Bennokimi, and indeed their apparent fondness for each other, the old woman might have acquired sinister ideas, and because in old romances wellborn ladies *never* threw themselves at men without benefit of intermediary, her women presented the weakest point in her defenses. (TG: 831)

The formidable armaments available to Heian aristocratic women are shown to offer only an illusion of security, with by far the most dangerous breach caused by members of her own sex. Like her many counterparts elsewhere in the literature, Ôigimi is betrayed by women who, having little choice to do otherwise, buy into the values of the patriarchal system.

The argument has been made that the domestic power struggle between Ôigimi and her servants functions as a microcosm of the larger one played out between a woman's personal needs and desires and the contradictory societal pressures.[19] Faced with overwhelming opposition, she feels utterly helpless: "it was as if they were intent upon pushing her into the man's arms. And indeed what was to keep them from having their way?" (TG: 832). There is little solace in female companionship where those who are sworn to serve and protect her prove more than a little traitorous: "she was attended by crones, women with obsessions that made no allowance for her own feelings" (TG: 832). Not intentionally unkind, but firmly believing they know best, the ladies-in-waiting willingly act as "partners in the conspiracy" (TG: 834) against their mistress and thus leave her to fend for herself in an increasingly hopeless battle of wills.[20]

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, she must resist her own desire, given that she is genuinely fond of Kaoru and initially gives some consideration to accepting him. He is, after all, neither an unattractive nor unsympathetic man and had earned the respect and admiration of her father. As Komashaku notes, the latter had in fact spent several years rather ineffectually casting about for a reliable male (*anshin dekiru otoko*[21]) to look after the sisters should he either die or take the tonsure. Who could be more ideally suited to Ôigimi than this handsome, well-connected young man of such steady character?

> Kaoru did not at all displease her. The Eighth Prince had said more than once that if Kaoru should be inclined to ask her hand, he would not disapprove. But no. She wanted to go on as she was. (TG: 829)

Steeling her resolve, Ôigimi refuses to be led down the treacherous path of romance. In bemoaning her own belated wisdom following an ill-advised erotic encounter, a character of Rousseau's states: "Ah ! le premier pas, qui coûte le plus, était celui qu'il ne fallait pas faire."[22] Give in but once, and a woman is lost, that first, ruinous step leading automatically and fatally to subsequent ones. And this proves true even when the male in question is as perfect as Kaoru appears. Ôigimi does not reject this particular suitor because of any particular flaw in himself, but rather because the entire gender relations and marriage system of the time is corrupt and hostile to women. As Komashaku again puts it in explaining what she calls the *irokoki messêji* ("dark message") of the *Genji*:

> *Onna no fukô wa, aite no otoko ga tamatama warui otoko de atta to iu yôna koto dewa nai, to Murasaki Shikibu wa hakkiri ninshiki shite ita. Dakara, Ôigimi ni shitemo Ukifune ni shitemo, aite no otoko ga ki ni iranai kara kyohi suru no dewa nai. Donna aite de atte mo, kyohi suru de aru.*[23]
>
> ("Murasaki Shikibu was fully aware that a woman's unhappiness is not a matter of her happening to meet up with an evil man. Accordingly, neither Ôigimi nor Ukifune reject their suitor because he does not appeal to them. They reject any suitor regardless of who or what he is.")

The scene where the elder sister busies herself with preparations for Nakanokimi's third nuptial night gives the reader a glimpse into the pain Ôigimi must feel in being left behind to play the role of old maid so prematurely. In the prime of life, she likely experiences, at least fleetingly, conflicting emotions about her decision to remain single. Nonetheless, she cannot reconcile normal human desires with her overpowering need to shield herself from the potentially insulting advances of men who may "look down upon ladies left to waste away in the mountains" (TG: 804). Field argues that Kaoru does indeed interest the princess sexually, and that rejection of the suitor costs her dearly. She posits that the princess' actions are prompted to some degree by a poor sense of self-worth as reflected in the eyes of patriarchal society:

> What's left for Oigimi to preserve is her pride, and all that remains for her pride to protect is the privacy (the secret) of her aging flesh.

> Woman's flesh, that most public of commodities in the functioning of the Fujiwara regency, is turned into the last refuge of the private self. Not, however, that this is acknowledged by that self. For the metaphysically inclined Ôigimi, the body, like other material things (such as partitions and screens) is subsidiary, serving to protect that pure essence called *kokoro*—heart-mind-spirit.[24]

The retreating tactics employed to protect that *kokoro* are varied. Ôigimi first hopes to discourage interest by claiming utter ignorance of courting rituals: *nanigoto mo omohishiranu arisama nite, shirikao ni mo ikaga wa kikoyubeku.*[25] (Seidensticker's translation, on page 786, reads: "We know nothing, nothing. How can we pretend otherwise?" A more literal rendering might put this into the first person.) When that fails, she reasons that by ignoring Kaoru, she can make him go away: "whenever he became forward, however slightly, she feigned deafness" (TG: 817). Next she tries to appeal to his better nature, reasoning that he should be satisfied with the uncommon degree of access that she has already granted him: *kô made ayashiki yo no tameshi naru arisama nite, hedate naku mote nashi habere. Sore o oboshiwakazarikeru koso wa, asaki koto mo majiritaru kokochi sure.*[26] ("I have allowed us to meet so intimately [literally: **without barriers**] that people must be scandalized. The fact that you cannot understand my feelings make me think you somewhat superficial." Seidensticker renders this section on page 823 as: "[…] so near that people must think it very odd. I gather that your view of the matter is different, and I must confess that I am disappointed.") The male is not so easily silenced, however, and she succeeds merely in being roundly scolded for stubbornness, with Kaoru using terms that demonstrate her constant privileging of interior space, especially noteworthy in Seidensticker's version: "Might you just possibly persuade yourself to be a little more friendly? You are not an insensitive lady, I know, and yet you do go on slamming the door" (TG: 823). A few pages later, he adds to himself: "If only she would stop retreating and putting up walls between us" (TG: 825). No matter what barriers she erects, however, they all prove to be fatally permeable. Kaoru easily breaks through her flimsy defences, for example: "[Ôigimi] withdrew behind a blind and a screen. [...] He quietly pushed the screen aside" (TG: 826). Although she attempts to lock and bar access, the male is always ready and willing to gain access to the female by force: "clutch[ing] at her sleeve through a crack in the door" (TG: 839), he is "prepared to break the door in" (TG: 840). Interiority is unambiguously aligned with the feminine, and functions as a metaphor for the eternal vulnerability of her body to male penetration. As Ôigimi recognizes, by this point "neither she nor her sister had any defenses left" (TG: 844) in their attempts at self-preservation.

Accordingly, Ôigimi's resistance to the patriarchal dynamic is manifested within the one sphere over which she has actual control: her body. We can find numerous examples throughout history and literature of women who have responded to the oppressive social order with anorexia, bulimia, and other eating disorders. In contrast to the heroine of Nakamoto Takako's 1929 short story "Suzumushi no Mesu" (well known in the West by virtue of Yukiko Tanaka's 1987 translation, entitled "The Female Bell-Cricket"), for instance, who seeks refuge from unjust patriarchal value judgements by gorging herself, Ôigimi takes the opposite tack and refuses all nourishment. In Sharalyn Orbaugh's words: "as the object of the male gaze a woman experiences her physical surface, delimited by the parameters of her body, as the determinant of her meaning in the scopic economy."[27] Our heroine therefore decides to protect herself from that gaze by eliminating this "physical surface." The hostility inherent to a patriarchal world leads her to deny her sexuality and attempt to thwart the male by denying even her own physicality. Ôigimi resolves to refuse life because life for a woman in Heian Japan implies surrendering to male invasion and control. Ironically, the less she ingests and the weaker and increasingly fragile she becomes, the more able she is to impose her will. Desperately rejecting food, sexuality, and colonization as symbolizing one and the same thing, Ôigimi is in fact able to escape the clutches of those who would possess her.

A famous use of food to represent an image of forbidden sexual experience with all its innate enticements and dangers is the poem *Goblin Market* by Christina Rossetti. Sisters Laura and Lizzie are tempted by the delectable fruits being sold by strange little men, with the former seduced into tasting the offerings. The fruit is of course a metaphor for carnal knowledge and sensuality that women partake of at great risk, which message is made explicit in the following lines about another victim:

> She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
> Who should have been a bride;
> But who for joys brides hope to have
> Fell sick and died.[28]

Lizzie manages to resist the goblin men even though they "Held her hands and squeezed their fruits / Against her mouth to make her eat"[29], thereby procuring her sister's freedom and return to chaste security. Herself figuratively fighting off the salacious goblins, not letting "the smallest bit of fruit pass her lips" (TG: 861), Ôigimi attains a super-virginal status where not even food is allowed to violate her bodily integrity. By rejecting consumption, this eternally besieged heroine is firmly rejecting consummation. Owing to her weak position as a lone female *sans* male protector, the only way to guarantee that others respect her integrity is via a suicidal denial of a basic physiological need. Orbaugh points out that power relationships are often defined as "who eats and who gets eaten."[30] Ôigimi does not want to be eaten—to be colonized, in other words—and so she simply refuses to eat. The etiology of her wasting away is fundamentally sexual. She communicates her rejection of the male through a language of sickness, whose causes are clearly internal rather than external: "Ôigimi's thoughts, indeed, were making her physically ill" (TG: 854), and: "The prisoner of these anguished thoughts, she quite refused to eat" (TG: 855).

If Irigaray is right that the body functions as a metaphor, the tale that unfolds in the first three Uji chapters is clearly about seizing control. The gender-determined patterns of dominance are inverted as Ôigimi simultaneously wastes away and imposes her will on the would-be seducer and his accomplices. Because the oppression she experiences is intimately connected with the female body, Ôigimi's only means of fighting back is by doing away with her corporeal self. This tragic story urges the reader to question the traditional defining characteristics of power, with woman's body as the political battleground. Like *Alice in Wonderland*, who experiments with growing and shrinking as she seeks her way through a baffling world, Ôigimi chooses to wither away, her body filling even less space than society has grudgingly allotted her. As more than one critic has pointed out, "it is worth noting that many of the original adventures of Alice have to do with the issue of edibility and identity […]."[31] Our protagonist similarly pushes the envelope of her sovereignty via an exploration of the eat / not-eat motif. Like the Third Princess, she believes that chastity is the key to remaining her own mistress, and sees yielding to the male as the epitome of dependence and loss of autonomy. Of course, while Alice eventually awakens from her dream and lives happily ever after, although Ôigimi may temporarily wield power through her act of resistance, she finds no real escape from the patriarchal construct.

Ôigimi wages an increasingly desperate battle to maintain the upper hand in the power struggle with Kaoru, but her defiance of the social codes dooms her to only an equivocal victory. Resisting the role society assigns to women, she remains subject to it, in that she has not gained independence from the male, but rather continues to react to him. The implications of overturning the dominant paradigm of power are obvious. In Ôba Minako's own modern parable of dominance, the husband asks his wife: "Do you expect to be able to say whatever is on your mind? If you think you can do that and survive, you are wrong."[32] Ôigimi has naïvely experimented with speaking her mind, or at least rejecting what she does not want, and refused to act the "normal" or "acceptable" woman. Ultimately, there is only one avenue open to her: to impose her will, to reject the role of victim imposed on her by a male-dominated society, she must remove herself from this society by dying.

Women have traditionally been denied agency in their own lives. Unable to embark on their own quest for self-fulfillment as men do, they are given only a twofold choice: accept or refuse. The literature of the Heian period offers a plethora of stories about women who have accepted the male's offer of marriage, and their various strategies for dealing with the often emotionally devastating results of that choice. In Ôigimi, Murasaki Shikibu now sheds light on the implications of taking the drastic step of actually refusing the male. The ultimate refusal is, of course, withdrawing from life itself. In *Over Her Dead Body*, Elisabeth Bronfen addresses the question of "how an aesthetically staged performance of death may [...] signify a moment of control and power"[33], explaining that the eponymous heroines of *Clarissa* and *Madame Bovary* make use of their own deaths as a conscious act of asserting their personalities. In the "Agemaki/Trefoil Knots" chapter as well, death, to Ôigimi, serves as an expression of self-determination in opposition to the will of the patriarchy, the one effective act of resistance she herself can choose and perform. As Bronfen phrases it:

> Staging disembodiment as a form of escaping personal and social constraints serves to criticize those cultural attitudes that reduce the feminine body to the position of dependency and passivity, to the vulnerable object of sexual incursions.[34]

The presumed passivity of the self-destructive act actually conceals a latent and, at least on one level, successful revolt against the male and his threatened sexual violence.

Following her father's death, Ôigimi is left with no sources of protection. As an orphan, she has lost what illusory security she had possessed within the patriarchal construct, and the omnipresent threat of societal hostility and judgement becomes an obsessive nightmare. While Tamakazura seeks a solution to her crisis in fiction and the Third Princess retreats into a pretend childhood, Ôigimi cannot escape the reality that reconciling her father's will and her own with Kaoru's demands, and indeed with security of self, is impossible. Almost her only self-expression is manifested as self-accusation for having ignored their father's wishes that the two sisters "resign [them]selves to the fact that it was not meant to be—that [they] are different from other people and were meant to be alone" (TG: 806). And yet, as both heroine and reader are fully aware, Ôigimi has in fact tried her best to get Kaoru to leave her alone, and it is due solely to his relentless battering at her defences that she has allowed him any access at all. She has never acted as the instigator or even deliberately behaved coyly with him, and the failure to remain isolated cannot realistically be taken as her fault. The lady doth protest, but is not this self-accusatory stance really a sort of subterfuge? Could our author be trying to deflect the blame that is liable to come from the patriarchal powers that be for what was always her actual intent: a description of forthright and very subversive rejection of this or any man? We have shown how Ôigimi's attempt to couch the decision not to marry in terms of filial piety, claiming that she is merely obeying her father and thus bowing to other patriarchal forces, is disingenuous. This heroine is guided from start to finish by her own needs and desires in resisting the male. In any event, with the masculine element belligerently demanding admittance, she sees no compromise possible and finds her only way out of an eternally threatening world is through suicide.

Ever an insightful novelist and observer/critic of her society, Murasaki Shikibu exposes the intrinsic, no matter how elegantly disguised, violence to the female body and identity of the unequal Heian power structure. Ôigimi appropriates and inverts subject and object, refusing a woman's passive, yielding role. We have demonstrated how this heroine, through a rejection of her own physical self, succeeds in imposing her will to remain virginal. Male power, represented by the impotent Kaoru, is challenged, and men are momentarily displaced from the centre of the universe and forced to defer to a woman's command of the situation. The fictions women compose about the worlds they inhabit are indebted to their day-to-day existence, and it cannot be coincidental that our author portrays female space as literally a **no-man**'s land where both surrender and resistance are in effect suicidal responses. Faced with these non-alternatives, the best she can hope for is to be master of her own fate, dire as it may be. Fully cognizant that the stalemate must end to her disadvantage, Ôigimi chooses to take her own life rather than suffer what she perceives to be an ineluctable, albeit figurative, death through male colonization of the female self.

Conclusion

> *By God, if wommen hadde writen stories,*
> *As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,*
> *They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse*
> *Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.*
> - Geoffrey Chaucer's Wife of Bath

> *Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—.*
> - Emily Dickinson, #1129

Women's space in Heian Japan was rigidly restricted, in that the majority of noblewomen were required to live almost exclusively indoors and privately, isolated from the external world belonging to men. Their socially-constructed marginalization thus confined them to the perimeters of power. Nonetheless, the physical isolation of the female characters discussed in this thesis—imposed by virtue of their gender, lack of *ushiromi*, and (with the exception of the Third Princess and, to a lesser extent, Ôigimi) relatively low status—paradoxically provides the authors with a space from which to criticize that marginalization and the hierarchies of control it represents.

The business of criticizing and protesting an omnipotent patriarchy is a dangerous one, and thus explicit statements are avoided. In their place, a variety of subtle spatial imagery is employed to delineate the personal boundaries of women seeking to resist masculine violations of their physical and emotional selves. These texts offer a fascinating somatization of conflict whereby femininity is coded in paradigms of interiority and sexual vulnerability. Our goal has been to explore and decode the hidden connections that exist in this literature between textuality and sexuality, territoriality and transgression, exterior and interior. By excavating a meta-text that may remain unread by all but the most sympathetic audience, we reveal unequivocal resistance to patriarchal oppression on numerous levels. Accordingly, the intrinsic and vital message expressed by various spatial metaphors is made available through a feminist reading that pays close attention to what these authors actually communicate.

This thesis has sought to demonstrate that, where the creative output of Heian women writers is concerned, an analysis based on gender issues can prove most informative, exposing buried layers that add immeasurably to our understanding of the multi-facetted nature of this literature. We have argued that both the *Kagerô nikki* and the *Genji monogatari* contain variously coded protests against what their authors rightly viewed as a restrictive social system controlled by predatory males. While women such as Michitsuna's Mother and Murasaki Shikibu did enjoy a privileged position as both members of the aristocratic class and acknowledged artists of poetry and prose, they were nevertheless often writing themselves out of the oppressive confines of patriarchal space. The words that the latter author puts into the mouth of her central female character, Murasaki, are unambiguous on this score:

> Such a difficult, constricting life as a woman was required to live! Moving things, amusing things, she must pretend to be unaffected by them. With whom was she to share the pleasure and beguile the tedium of this fleeting world? Since it chose to look upon women as useless, unfeeling creatures, should it not pity the fathers who went to such trouble rearing them? Like the mute prince who was always appearing in sad parables, a woman should be sensitive but silent. The balance was certainly very difficult to maintain—[…]. (TG: 699)

Surely this sentiment holds true for literary production as well as life, with Heian women authors constantly in search of a balance between sensitivity—awareness of their world and the pleasures, conflicts, and dangers it offers—and the silence strictly imposed by the patriarchy with regard to certain aspects of their lived reality. A close examination of these two works reveals strong, albeit carefully muted, messages concerning spatial, corporeal, and psychological integrity that serve to challenge the inhibiting ideology that these women had inherited. By taking the metaphors seriously, we gain access to the partially repressed expression of and remonstrations against much of women's experience with men that constitute an important theme within this literature.

The argument set forth in the preceding chapters has been concerned with the use of images of private space to express this female resistance. Shirane makes the following, very relevant comment:

> In contrast to the early *tsukuri monogatari*, in which male authors drew freely on the supernatural and the imaginary, the women writers of the *kana nikki* depended almost entirely on their personal life (*mi no ue*) for their subject matter.[1]

Readers in the late 20th century cannot easily overlook the fact that the personal is political, and neither do the writers who concern us here. Sexual politics are played out in their work with women's bodies serving again and again as the battleground. Earl Miner points out that the writings of Izumi Shikibu reveal a similar fear that relationships with men would inevitably result in "a loss of power over her own little world, a loss of freedom to lie, however unhappily, in the shadows of her own room."[2] Few and far between are the women accorded any real choice, however, as the male consciously or unconsciously usurps their power and denies their freedom and self-determination by asserting his own desires and universally acknowledged right of access.

We first discussed such metaphors quite literally, focussing on how female physical space (e.g. interiority within a woman-owned home, the placement of curtains and screens to shield women from the male gaze) and geographically based sanctuaries (e.g. women preferring to live in the hinterlands, distanced from the male-dominated Heian capital) are described and inhabited. The thesis then moved on to consideration of mental space and violations of psychological/emotional boundaries, arguing that retreating within a false prepubescent state or opting for self-starvation exemplify some of the ultimately doomed strategies employed by women looking to retain control over their bodies and lives. The various rebellions we have examined in these pages are expressed quietly and with a common emphasis on enclosure and retreat. As Emily Dickinson (in poem #1123) was to write centuries later and a continent away:

> A great Hope fell
> You heard no noise
> The Ruin was within
> Oh cunning wreck that told no tale
> And let no Witness in.[3]

Of all the men portrayed in these two texts, Yûgiri (despite his faults) perhaps comes closest to real understanding of these frequently reticent and refuge-seeking women. After some initial titillation about his youthful stepmother, his reaction to the Third Princess eventually concludes as follows: "He was coming to see what sort of lady she was. She was very young and rather quiet, and that was all" (TG: 580). These heroines truly desire nothing more than a comfortable life wherein their boundaries are respected by those around them. Pursued by eternally licentious males who project their own, self-serving attitudes on the women and refuse to yield before the presence of any barrier, be it physical or psychological, however, such a goal is unattainable. They are constantly threatened by the inevitable "Ruin" engendered by relationships in which the power is ineluctably one-sided.

Judith Freyer cites sociologist Shirley Ardener as pointing out that "space reflects social organization, and that once space has been bounded and shaped, it is no longer a neutral background: it exerts its own influence."[4] The spatial metaphors contained in both the *Kagerô nikki* and *Genji monogatari* should rarely if ever be construed as neutral or innocent. Heian aristocratic mores decreed that the weaker sex should remain indoors, or at least normally concealed behind walls, screens, and other barriers, and thus these women were denied free intercourse with the world at large. While our authors do portray female characters chaffing at the gloomy prospect of listless days spent locked away in perpetual anticipation of masculine visits that may or may not occur, they also show how such imposed interiority conversely becomes a sanctuary highly valued by its inmates. It has been noted that both the Akashi Lady and the narrator of the *Sarashina nikki* focus on "the anguish of leaving home and entering into a new and uncertain world."[5] The topos of adventure into the wilderness so familiar to masculine *monogatari* and other narratives cannot hold true for the female, who is hemmed in and bound to interior spaces and whose freedom depends rather on turning ever further inward, protecting and reinforcing her boundaries. To women in the ruthlessly patriarchal and predatory society of Heian Japan, the external world symbolizes not freedom and independence but rather a constant threat of violation. Our heroines recognize that solace must be sought only in ever-increasing retreat within, on both the physical and psychological levels.

In contrast to the romanticism that can be found in such texts as the *Ochikubo monogatari*, a Cinderella-like tale roughly contemporary to the *Kagerô nikki*, we have here no starry-eyed, pliant females. All four of these women reject or resist traditional relationships with men insofar as they are inherently unequal and thus a threat to autonomy and self. This is, however, a stance that dares not speak its name, but must instead be concealed behind metaphorical retreat. After all, the self-defence strategies acted out by the four characters discussed in this thesis challenge and "threaten male prerogatives in a patriarchal ordering of individual and social life."[6] The astute reader is led to ask: what benefit marriage? While the superficially matrilineal codes allow the Heian noblewoman nominally to retain her own wealth and home separate from the husband's, she still, like Richardson's Clarissa, is called upon to surrender for life both her body and her privacy. Each and every one of the characters discussed in this thesis is instinctively and inescapably conscious that wedlock represents a significant and often fatal frontier: once succumbing to the male, these women's choices, identity, and independence will in many ways be lost forever.

Quoted as an epigraph to Chapter Three were the closing lines of "The Sleeping Beauty" by Wilfred Owen. It may be worthwhile to cite the poem in its entirety at this stage:

> Sojourning through a southern realm in youth,
> I came upon a house by happy chance
> Where bode a marvellous Beauty. There, romance
> Flew faerily until I lit on truth—

> For lo! The fair Child slumbered. Though, forsooth,
> She lay not blanketed in drowsy trance,
> But leapt alert of limb and keen of glance,
> From sun to shower; from gaiety to ruth;
> Yet breathed her loveliness asleep in her:
> For, when I kissed, her eyelids knew no stir.
> So back I drew tiptoe from that Princess,
> Because it was too soon, and not my part,
> To start voluptuous pulses in her heart,
> And kiss her to the world of Consciousness.

Owen provides us here with great insight into the benefits and refuge that a life of solitude and chastity offers women within an often hostile world. The putative knight in shining armour who appears on the scene cannot and must not be welcomed unreservedly, for he represents an inevitable loss of self-determination. Like Michitsuna's Mother, the Akashi Lady, the Third Princess, and Ôigimi, Owen's princess knows herself to be better off in a private, female-centred world where she can leap independently and joyously "from sun to shower", isolated from the often grim power politics comprising adult sexual relationships. Surrounded by the maze of patriarchal constructs, any female character who is at all "keen of glance" must be conscious of the need to keep men at bay. Our heroines know that no access to a happier universe will be revealed, and so they must merely burrow inward, turning their back on such relationships, in the pathetic hope that they will be left in peace. An excerpt from the *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* plays with traditional poetic tropes to comment on the personal dangers women face from involvement with the male:

> One night as I lay asleep in a room in the corridor, there come the sound of someone tapping at the door. I was so frightened that I kept quiet for the rest of the night. Early next morning I received:
>
> > Crying crying all night long
> > More constant than the water rail
> > In vain did I tap at your door.

To which I replied:

> The water rail was indeed insistent;
> But had I opened up, come dawn,
> I may well have had bitter regrets.[7]

Private space and sexual neutrality are to be cherished, indeed clung to, if one is to protect the self from intrusions that do not respect a woman's independence.

The Third Princess functions as the quintessential blank page on which patriarchal society transcribes its own values. Genji and others clearly view her as a *tabula rasa*, theirs to train according to their own tastes. What they (along with some critics) fail to notice is that the page is not truly blank at all, merely covered with writing (of the female self, of female observations) that to them remains illegible—a script in an unheeded, because subtle and sex-coded, language. This interpretation applies equally well to our three other heroines. To borrow a line from poet Christina Rossetti, each female character appears to husband and/or suitor "not as she is, but as she fills his dream."[8] The male characters never seem to spare much thought for the wife's actual feelings or her insecure and often unpropitious future. McCullough rightly comments that, for Genji,

> when the imminence of his separation from the Akashi lady intensifies a previously tepid passion, he reflects, not on the plight of the pregnant girl, but on the unkindness of fate that seems to have doomed him to a life of unhappiness.[9]

The eternally self-involved male seems unwilling or unable to see beyond himself, and even the most modest dreams of the women in his life do not count for much.

All four examples illustrate varied and imaginative use of spatial metaphor to symbolize resistance to the status quo. While paying lip-service to the stereotype of lovesick females thrilled with a mere glance from a highly placed nobleman. Michitsuna no Haha and Murasaki Shikibu construct subversive meta-texts exposing the everyday violation of spatial, corporeal and emotional integrity to which Heian women were subject. In such an overtly patriarchal culture, this dissent was openly expressed only at the risk of social opprobrium and the male protector's withdrawal of support. Intelligent and prudent women thus demur but covertly, in the interests of social survival. Michitsuna's Mother is all too well aware that her marriage with Kaneie, unfulfilling as it may be, serves importantly to define her place in society and thus her security. The Akashi Lady pragmatically takes the utmost care to leave Genji with the false but advantageous impression that she yields and assents to his self-centred demands. Likewise, the Third Princess declines to verbalize her dissent, opting instead to remain silent and childlike in the face of masculine incursions. And lastly, Ôigimi's futile resistance to the male quickly teaches her that the sole possible escape from colonization is death. Like George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, this final heroine cannot ignore the fact that any hope of being allowed to lead her own life as she pleases is mere fantasy:

> But I begin to think there can never come much happiness to me from loving; I have always has so much pain mingled with it. I wish I could make myself a world outside it, as men do.[10]

However, patriarchal society does not look kindly upon any such rejection by women of its existing structuring of interpersonal relations. In few of the cases discussed in this thesis do the Heian patriarchy's male representatives shrink from more or less ruthlessly violating any and all barriers set up to dissuade them.

To quote the great *Genji* scholar Motoori Norinaga: "To read the novel careless of such details slights the care lavished upon it by the author."[11] The "details" dealt with in the preceding chapters are indeed an integral part of the *Kagerô nikki* and *Genji monogatari*, and a careful reading must acknowledge the powerfully seditious messages incorporated into the characterizations and events by their authors, consciously or otherwise. We have argued that, far from seeking "midi à quatorze heures"[12] by mistakenly ascribing to a writer a position or philosophy that she had never intended to imply, a feminist critical approach can unearth aspects that are intrinsic and essential to these particular texts. For this reader, the accent of these two works falls squarely on images of enclosure, as our authors describe spatial envelopes, both physical and psychological, in which they or the characters they create shield themselves from intimacy with the male, which by definition threatens female autonomy. The imaginative structures employed in the two texts are in fact structures of subversion, with the authors writing both to express and to conceal, to mask and to signal. What George Steiner has written about Eliot, that her "perceptions of sexual feeling, the closeness of observation she brings to bear on erotic sensibility and conflict, yield nothing to that of the moderns"[13], is ideally applicable to these two women living some thousand years ago as well. Through the subtle use of literary metaphors of space, in the end both Michitsuna no Haha and Murasaki Shikibu masterfully construct a continuum of women's resistance to what is physical and actual—their oppression by a predatory patriarchy.

Notes

Introduction

[1] This is not to deny that other important writers such as Sei Shônagon and Murasaki Shikibu spent several years serving as ladies-in-waiting to an empress and were thus hardly in a position of isolation. Nonetheless, there is evidence that Murasaki Shikibu had completed at least part of her masterpiece *The Tale of Genji* while still in private life. In addition, court service lasted a finite term, and the fact remains that women were allowed far less intercourse with the world at large than their male counterparts.

[2] Dale Spender, "Women and Literary History" in Belsey, Catherine and Jane Moore, eds., *The Feminist Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997) 16.

[3] In fact, when Ki no Tsurayuki set out to write his early 10th-century *Tosa nikki* in Japanese, he did so in the persona of a woman. This has lead to centuries of speculation as to whether it was felt that only women were capable of authoring such works.

[4] Helen Craig McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose: An Anthology* (Stanford, Stanford University Press: 1990), 7.

[5] Francine Hérail, *La Cour du Japon à l'époque de Heian aux Xe et XIe siècles* (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1995) 161.

[6] See the introduction to their *Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

[7] Doris Bargen. *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in* The Tale of Genji (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997) 1.

[8] Hérail 164.

[9] Bruce A. Coats, "Buildings and Gardens in *The Tale of Genji*" in *Approaches to Teaching Murasaki Shikibu's* The Tale of Genji. Edward Kamens, Ed. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1993) 56.

[10] McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose* 73.

[11] Norma Field, *The Splendor of Longing in the* Tale of Genji (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 74.

[12] Sonja Arntzen, *The Kagerô Diary* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1997) 169.

[13] *Ibid.* 171.

[14] Sandra M. Gilbert, "What do Feminist Critics Want? A postcard from the Volcano" in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, Elaine Showalter, ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) 35.

[15] Richard Bowring, trans., *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* (London: Penguin, 1996) xxv-vi.

[16] Hérail, 108.

[17] Arntzen, [Introduction to] *The Kagerô Diary* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1997) 5.

[18] Elaine Showalter, "Toward a Feminist Poetics" in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, Elaine Showalter, ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) 133.

[19] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) 227.

[20] Ôba Minako, "Special Address: Without Beginning, Without End", trans. Paul Gordon Schalow, *The Woman's Hand.* Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 33.

[21] In this connection, see especially Showalter, "Toward a Feminist Poetics."

[22] Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970) 11.

[23] Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) xxiii.

[24] Showalter 266.

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[25] Patrocinio P. Schweickart, "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading", in *Speaking of Gender*, Elaine Showalter, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1989) 25.

[26] Sonja Arntzen, "Translating Difference in the *Kagerô nikki*", *The Japan Foundation Newsletter*, 21:3, pp. 16-19." (1993) 17.

[27] Kawaguchi Hisao, ed., *Tosa nikki. Kagerofu nikki. Izumi Shikibu nikki. Sarashina nikki.* Nihon koten bungaku taikei, Vol. 20 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963) 109.

[28] Joshua Mostow, "The Amorous Statesman and the Poetess: The Politics of Autobiography and the *Kagerô Nikki*", *Japan Forum*, 4.2 (1992) 305

[29] Edward Seidensticker, [Introduction to] *The Gossamer Years: The Diary of a Noblewoman of Heian Japan* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1964) 14.

[30] *Ibid.* 8.

[31] Jacques Derrida, "Force et Signification", cited in Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993) 17.

[32] Cited in G.G. Rowley, "Textual Malfeasance in Yosano Akiko's *Shin'yaku Genji Monogatari.*" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (June 1998) 203.

Chapter One

[1] Field 133.

[2] Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince* (London: Penguin Books, 1985) 255.

[3] Seidensticker, [Introduction to] *The Gossamer Years* 19.

[4] Arntzen, [Introduction to] *The Kagerô Diary* 6.

[5] Arntzen, "Translating Difference in the *Kagerô nikki*" 16.

[6] See Mostow, "The Amorous Statesman" *passim.*

[7] McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose* 17.

[8] An interesting discussion of this notion is found in Rachel Brownstein, *Becoming A Heroine: Reading About Women in Novels* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 36.

[9] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (New York: Penguin, 1967) 171.

[10] Kawaguchi 114-15.

[11] Hérail 117.

[12] See, for example, Shoshana Felman, *What does a woman want? Reading and Sexual Difference* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993) 52.

[13] Joshua Mostow, "'Just Like a Picture': Metaphors of Beauty, Romance, and the Feminine Regard" in ICLA '91: Tokyo: The Force of Vision I: Dramas of Desire, Visions of Beauty (1995) 466.

[14] Arntzen, *The Kagerô Diary* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1997) 57. All further citations from this translation will be referenced in the text by the abbreviation KD, followed by page number in this edition.

[15] McCullough, *Classical Japanese Prose* 71.

[16] Ellen Peel, "Mediation and Mediators: Letters, Screens, and Other Go-Betweens in *The Tale of Genji*" in *Approaches to Teaching Murasaki Shikibu's* The Tale of Genji. Edward Kamens, Ed. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1993) 114.

[17] Although there is no room in this thesis for such an endeavour, it would be of great interest to examine the use Michitsuna's Mother makes of her poetry in establishing and maintaining relationships, on the one hand, and, on the other, keeping people at a distance.

[18] Brownstein 60.

[19] Kawaguchi 138.

[20] George Eliot, *Felix Holt: The Radical* (New York: Everyman's Library, 1967) 345.

[21] Much later, of course, Freud was to explain churches as a dream metaphor for female genitalia, offering support for interpreting this scene as a figurative rape.

[22] Field 82.

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[23] Ivan Morris, trans., *The Pillow Book of Sei Shônagon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 181.

[24] George Sand, *Indiana* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984) 88.

[25] Alice Munro, *The Progress of Love* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 3.

[26] Kawaguchi 124.

[27] See Arntzen, *The Kagerô Diary*, pages 219, 253, and 255.

[28] Michitsuna no Haha's willingness to discuss openly with her husband matters concerning his principal wife Tokihime may be offered as an argument against this interpretation. However, since Tokihime preceded our author into Kaneie's life, she has always been considered a given rather than a newly introduced threat to our author's status. Similarly, in the scene where the narrator shares a laugh with Kaneie over some infelicitous poetry composed by another of his lovers (KD: 287), the element of threat to their marital bond is again lacking, owing to the rival's obviously inferior literary skills.

[29] Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince* 217.

[30] Field 123.

[31] See especially Arntzen, *The Kagerô Diary*, pages 153, 159, and 197-201.

[32] Field 337.

[33] Coats 58.

[34] Arntzen, *The Kagerô Diary* 126.

[35] Gilbert and Gubar 313.

[36] Field 190.

[37] Roselee Bundy, "Japan's First Woman Diarist and the Beginnings of Prose Writings by Women in Japan" in *Women's Studies* (1991, Vol. 19) 92.

[38] Mostow, "'Just Like a Picture'" 465.

[39] Lynn K. Miyake, "Woman's Voice in Japanese Literature: Expanding the Feminine" in *Women's Studies* (1989, Vol. 17) 96.

[40] *Ibid.* 95.

[41] Bundy 85.

[42] Miyake 90.

[43] In an echo of the situations that concerned women writers halfway around the world some eight hundred years earlier, another Austen heroine, Anne Eliot, comments that women "live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us" (*Persuasion*, cited in Gilbert and Gubar 60).

[44] Kawaguchi 109.

[45] Arntzen, [Introduction to] *The Kagerô Diary* 7.

Chapter Two

[1] Haruo Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of 'The Tale of Genji'* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) 82.

[2] Richard H. Okada, *Figures of Resistance: Language, Poetry, and Narrating in The Tale of Genji and Other Mid-Heian Texts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) 136.

[3] Edward Seidensticker, trans., *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989) 260. All further citations from this translation will be referenced in the text by the abbreviation TG, followed by page number in this edition.

[4] In fact, it is widely acknowledged that Akashi no Kimi is among the finest poets in the entire tale.

[5] Field 64.

[6] Adrienne Rich. "Vesuvius at Home" in Gilbert and Gubar, eds., *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets* (Bloomington: Indians University Press, 1979) 100.

[7] Abe *et al.* 12:239.

[8] *Ibid.* 12:247.

[9] *Ibid.* 12:422.

[10] Shirane 82.

[11] Field 77.

[12] *Ibid.* 73.

[13] Throughout Akashi no Kimi's story, she is forced to efface herself, especially vis-à-vis Murasaki. This is partly to avoid arousing jealousy and damaging her daughter's chances of happiness, but the reader is led to wonder whether she has ever truly desired Genji's attentions in any event. She may indeed welcome his dwindling attentions and be sincere about calmly yielding him to Murasaki, so long as she is granted the respect she requires.

[14] Shirane 80.

[15] While there is no textual support for this idea, it is interesting to speculate whether Akashi no Kimi might on one level enjoy satisfaction in reversing the roles of principal and subordinate by placing a permanent, and living, reminder of herself in Murasaki's household. After all, she has done something the favourite wife has been unable to do: give Genji a child, the means whereby he can further his career. Along other lines, as if to remind the reader that the security of any woman (even the Akashi princess backed by Genji and his beloved and highborn Murasaki) can never be unqualified, this daughter will eventually take over the Court apartments that had belonged to Genji's own mother, who was hounded to death by her rivals.

[16] Field 85.

[17] Shirane 83.

[18] Marian Ury, "The Real Murasaki," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer 1983) 184.

[19] Field 80.

[20] *Ibid.* 64.

[21] Shirane 87.

Chapter Three

[1] Abe 15:14 and *passim*.

[2] Abe 15:66 and *passim*.

[3] Field 234.

[4] Helen Craig McCullough, *Genji & Heike: Selections from* The Tale of Genji *and* The Tale of the Heike (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) 17.

[5] Although the Third Princess is introduced on page 537 (of Seidensticker's translation), the first time she is allowed to express an opinion of her own appears on p. 565, when she notices how kind Murasaki is. The only other indications of her thoughts (at least in this English version) is the panic described some 21 pages later, and after six years have passed, when she realizes that Kashiwagi has seen her, and on p. 613, when she realizes that he is in her room. She is not permitted direct speech until her poem on p. 615. Throughout the description of her marriage and relocation to Genji's residence, our author keeps her heroine's thoughts a secret.

[6] Field 234.

[7] *Ibid.* 285.

[8] Edwin A. Cranston, trans. and ed., *The Izumi Shikibu Diary: A Romance of the Heian Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 139.

[9] Abe 15:56.

[10] *Ibid.* 15:66.

[11] This strategy is even more successful where onlooker Yûgiri is concerned. Mildly titillated by the presence of his extremely young stepmother, "Yûgiri was not exactly consumed with longing and curiosity, but he did hope that he might sometime have a glimpse of her too" (TG: 580). Nonetheless, "certain evidences of immaturity had had the effect not exactly of cheapening her in his eyes but certainly of cooling his ardor" (TG: 603).

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[12] Abe 15:66.

[13] In this connection, consider the famous lines by Dickinson (poem #435):
Assent—and you are sane—
Demur—you're straightway dangerous—
And handled with a chain—.

[14] Arthur Waley, trans., "The Lady Who Loved Insects". *Anthology of Japanese Literature*. Donald Keene, ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1955) 174.

[15] *Ibid.* 170.

[16] *Ibid.* 171.

[17] Donald Keene, *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkô* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967) 37.

[18] We will see in the next chapter of this thesis some very interesting parallels with the Eighth Prince, who is also his daughters' sole surviving parent and champion.

[19] Ury, "The Real Murasaki" 187.

[20] Kate Chopin, The Awakening *and Selected Stories* (New York: Penguin, 1984) 50.

[21] See Arntzen, *The Kagerô Diary* 287.

[22] Abe 15:20.

[23] We see with Fujitsubo's sadly besieged married life the consequences that result when a woman is unable to enlist the support of her husband's other wives.

[24] Gilbert and Gubar 505.

[25] Brownstein 212.

[26] Field 109.

[27] Bargen 152-3. (Seidensticker's translation reads: "It was as if there were no flesh holding up the great mounds of clothing.")

[28] Abe 15:66.

[29] McCullough, *Genji & Heike* 17.

[30] Shirane 39.

[31] Cited in Rich 106.

[32] *Ibid.* 107.

[33] Abe 15:30.

[34] McCullough, *Genji & Heike* 17.

[35] Bargen 157.

[36] Rich 108.

[37] As an interesting parallel in "The Lady Who Loved Insects", that atypical heroine also allows herself to be seen "at full length" (Waley, "The Lady Who Loved Insects" 175).

[38] Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Thomas H. Johnson, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960) 250.

[39] What a heyday a Freudian would have with a detailed examination of all this. Indeed, the temptation to title this chapter "Appropriation of her Pussy" was all but irresistible.

[40] Mostow, "The Amorous Statesman" 308.

[41] In a lovely bit of foreshadowing as to the prospects of the princess finding warmth and security in this marriage, our author tells us that the day after this marriage contract was settled "was dark, with flurries of snow" (TG: 549). The reader is momentarily lead astray by the suggestion that it will be jealousy from Murasaki that threatens the happiness of this new couple, only to discover that the threat is instead inherent to relations with the masculine element.

[42] Field 190.

[43] Gilbert and Gubar 364.

Chapter Four

[1] "Akiko wa jûni-sai de kôkyû ni hairaretan dakedo, nenne de, ren'ai mo sekusu mo wakaranai. O-ningyô mitaina hito deshô. Tsumari, 'Genji' wa isshu no seikyôiku hon datta no yo." Tawara Machi. "Ima mo mukashi mo ai koso jinsei no gendôryoku." Interview with Setouchi Jakuchô. (Tokyo: Shûkan Asahi August 21-8, 1998) 45.

[2] Cited in *Ibid.* 120.

[3] Shirane. See especially pp. 140-41.

[4] Brownstein 35.

[5] In having Kaoru travel to Uji through darkness and rain, dressed inconspicuously and accompanied by a reduced number of retainers, the narrator accords him all the trappings of a lover on his way to a secret tryst. Indeed, our hero, unfamiliar with such intrigues, seems to derive a certain level of sexual exhilaration from the escapade, even before the women appear on the scene: "This was not the sort of journey he was accustomed to. It was sobering and at the same time exciting" (TG: 783).

[6] Mostow. "'Just Like a Picture'" 467.

[7] As pleasantly perfumed as his robes are supposed to be, could this not be taken as an unwanted invasion of the heroine's olfactory space?

[8] Abe *et al.* 16: 131.

[9] Edward Seidensticker. *Genji Days* (New York: Kodansha International, 1983) 203.

[10] Brownstein 36.

[11] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics*. Carl N. Degler, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966) 65.

[12] Brownstein 288-9.

[13] Komashaku Kimi. *Murasaki Shikibu no messêji* (Tokyo: Asahi, 1991) 220.

[14] See Shirane 142-43.

[15] Seidensticker, *Genji Days* 123.

[16] *Ibid.* 114.

[17] Komashaku 160.

[18] Abe *et al.* 16: 130.

[19] See Shirane 145.

[20] It is highly ironic (not to mention indicative of the limited strategies open to women of the time) that Ôigimi herself betrays Nakanokimi in the same manner, slipping away through the curtains and abandoning her younger sister to Kaoru. Fortuitously, Kaoru's restraint and unshakeable belief that he still has a chance with "the icy one" (TG: 835) save the sister from defloration at this time.

[21] Komashaku 162.

[22] Cited in Miller, Nancy K. *The Heroine's Text: Readings in the French and English Novel, 1722-1782* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1980) x.

[23] Komashaku 221.

[24] Field 242.

[25] Abe *et al.* 16: 134.

[26] *Ibid.* 16:216.

[27] Sharalyn Orbaugh. "The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women's Fiction." *The Woman's Hand.* Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 122.

[28] Christina Rossetti. *Goblin Market* in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979) 1530.

[29] *Ibid.* 1532.

[30] Orbaugh 138.

[31] *Ibid.* 160.

[32] Ôba Minako. "Special Address: Without Beginning, Without End." Paul Gordon Schalow, trans. *The Woman's Hand.* Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 35.

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[33] Elizabeth Bronfen. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) 141.

[34] *Ibid.* 142.

Conclusion

[1] Shirane 87.

[2] Earl Miner. *Japanese Poetic Diaries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) 37.

[3] Dickinson 504.

[4] Judith Freyer, *Felicitous Space: The Imaginative Structures of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 49.

[5] Shirane 83.

[6] Albert Gelpi, "Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America" in *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979) 125.

[7] Bowring, *The Diary of Lady Murasaki* 61.

[8] Christina Rossetti, "In an Artist's Study" in Abrams *et al.*, eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979) 1521.

[9] McCullough, *Genji & Heike* 18.

[10] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (New York: Penguin, 1985) 528.

[11] Cited in Thomas J. Harper, "*The Tale of Genji* in the eighteenth century: Keichû, Mabuchi and Norinaga" in *18th Century Japan*. C. Andrew Gerstle, ed. (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989) 112.

[12] George Sand, [Preface to] *Indiana* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984) 35.

[13] George Steiner, "Eros and Idiom", in *On Difficulty, and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 105.

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